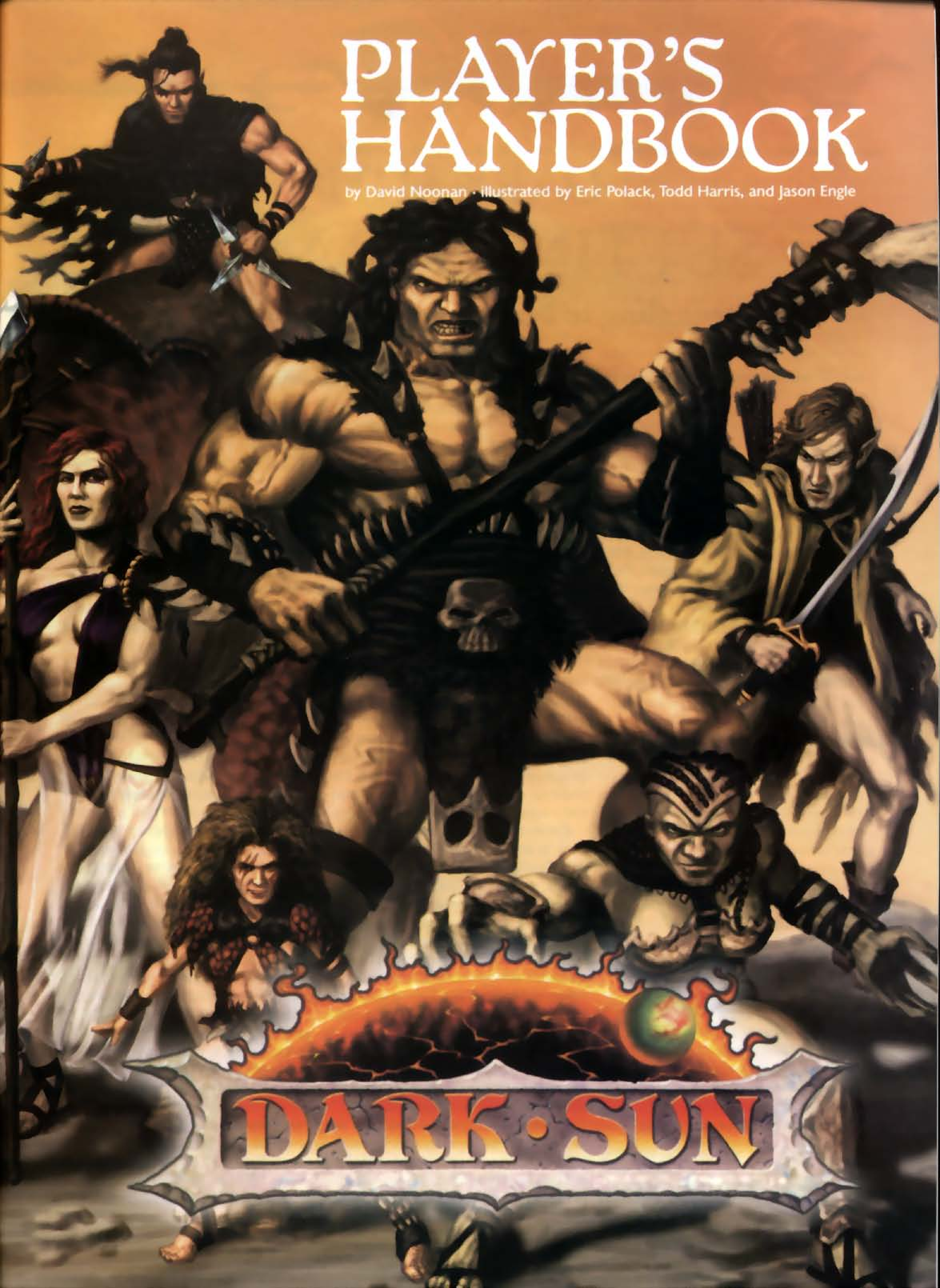
# PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

by David Noonan · illustrated by Eric Polack, Todd Harris, and Jason Engle



# DARK SUN SETTING & RACES

## Struggling to Survive in a Savage World

**by David Noonan · illustrated by Todd Harris and Jason Engle**

The world of DARK SUN is a harsh wasteland created by evil magic that sucked the life from the planet. Once, it was a lush, green world of vast oceans and teeming jungles, but mighty dragon-kings, mad for power, developed magic that sapped life energy. As they used this defiling magic against each other, they turned oceans into deserts and forests into ash.

Today, the dragon-kings have become petty godlings, ruling over the lands they ruined. Each controls a massive city-state and is the object of worship by the corrupt theocracy that does the day-to-day ruling. Every city-state has a large army, but the dragon-kings rarely war against each other anymore. Indeed, the templars who worship the dragon-kings rarely even see them.

Life is hard on Athas, the world of DARK SUN. Slaves toil endlessly in temperatures that often exceed 110 degrees. Merchants and nobles are subject to the cruel whims of the templars and the intrigues of their fellows. DARK SUN is a place of scarcity, and many hands grasp at the few remaining gifts the world has to offer.

Do you have the strength and will to take what you need to survive and conquer in the desert wastes?

### HOW TO EXPLORE THE WORLD

This update of DARK SUN is broken up into a number of articles. Everything you need as a player can be found in this magazine, at the page numbers indicated below.

**Introduction and Races:** Page 18.
**Classes:** Page 32.
**Equipment and Rules:** Page 38.

*DUNGEON* #110 contains the DM's Guide to DARK SUN, designed to help a DM get a DARK SUN game up and running. *DUNGEON* #110 also features "Last Stand at Outpost Three," an adventure for beginning DARK SUN characters. The PCs find themselves besieged by marauding elves in a wilderness trading outpost.

**"Last Stand at Outpost Three":** Page 32.
**DM's Guide to DARK SUN:** Page 58.
**DARK SUN Monster Supplement:** Page 82.

### WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

DARK SUN has a rich history established with a boxed campaign set published in 1991, an update of the setting in 1995, and a line of adventures and accessories that stretched until late 1996. Yet the revision of the D&D rules in 2000 meant that many aspects of the DARK SUN campaign became problematic.

The setting is as evocative as ever, but many of the specific mechanical elements (such as half-giants who always got d12s for Hit Dice and defiler wizards as a separate class from preservers) don't work with the new D&D rules. In this DARK SUN update, the current D&D rules take precedence over specific rules from old DARK SUN products—as long as the flavor of the world is maintained. There's no separate gladiator class, for example, because a fighter with the right feat choices does everything a gladiator needs to do.

This update of the setting also avails itself of the new rules elements in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*. Psionics has always been an important part of DARK SUN, and Athas is a great place for a psion, psychic warrior, wilder, or soulknife to adventure. This article also introduces two of the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*'s new races, the elan and the maenad, to the world of DARK SUN.

Some players who fell in love with the DARK SUN setting in the 1990s have already updated their campaigns to take advantage of the new D&D rules. If you're one of those players, keep doing what you're doing, but you might get some good ideas from what you're about to read.

This update also sets the timeline of the game forward 300 years and restores the political situation to something like it was when the first DARK SUN product was published. Like many campaign settings of the time, DARK SUN had a strong metaplot, and the situation in the city-states of Athas changed dramatically from sourcebook to sourcebook. This update provides a stable starting point, but what happens to the world of Athas from this point forward is up to you.

## RACES OF ATHAS

There are twelve PC races to choose from in the DARK SUN campaign. DARK SUN PC races—even those from the *Player's Handbook* and *Expanded Psionics Handbook*—are often more powerful than their standard versions, and all have a level adjustment of +1 or +2. The harsh world of DARK SUN produces tough people, and characters in the campaign begin play able to face greater threats. For fans of the old DARK SUN setting, this emulates the tougher races it presented and the rule that players must begin play with 4th-level characters.

### Aarakocras

The winged birdmen known as aarakocras are a rare sight in the settled parts of Athas. Only aarakocra travelers, traders, diplomats, and exiles spend much time among the city-states.

**Personality:** A typical aarakocra is known for his need for freedom, both in the literal and figurative sense. Most aarakocras are quite claustrophobic and intensely uncomfortable when restrained in any way; they also dislike long-term obligations to others, and many become depressed or suicidal when pressed into military service or slavery.

**Physical Description:** An aarakocra's arms form the leading edge of his wings, which also attach to his torso at the hips. About midway along each wing is a clawed hand with fine motor ability rivaling that of a human. When flying, aarakocras can manipulate items in their foot-talons as well as they could if they were holding them in their hands.

An aarakocra's plumage varies from white to bluish-gray.

**Relations:** Aarakocras tend to get along well with most other races. Because they come from isolated communities far north of the city-states, they are sometimes surprised by the quirks of other races.

**Alignment:** Aarakocra society is loosely knit and seminomadic, so aarakocras have a tendency to be chaotic.

**Aarakocra Lands:** The vast majority of aarakocras come from a region hundreds of miles north of the Tablelands called Winter Nest. Some few are born in aarakocra trading outposts or diplomatic enclaves in the city-states.

**Religion:** Some aarakocras rely on clerics of Air for religious guidance, while others heed the teachings of the few druids in their midst. Those aarakocras confronted with the theocracies of the city-states pay only lip service to the notion of worshiping the dragon-kings.

**Language:** Aarakocras speak their own language, Aarakocra. Most aarakocra in Winter Nest and elsewhere have enough contact with merchants from the city-states that they speak Common as well. An aarakocra's beak has an easier time with the clicking sounds of the Thri-Kreen language than humanoid mouths.

**Names:** Aarakocras tend to have a single multisyllabic name with lots of vowels and soft consonants in them.

**Adventurers:** A burning desire to explore and a natural inquisitiveness serve aarakocra adventurers well, although few aarakocras stray from Winter Nest. Those who leave find the city-states fascinating, if puzzling and sometimes dangerous.

#### Aarakocra Racial Traits

- +4 Dexterity, -2 Strength. Lightweight but fast, aarakocras are built for speed over strength.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, aarakocras have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Monstrous Humanoid: Because they aren't humanoids, aarakocras are immune to spells such as *charm person* and *hold person*.
- Aarakocras have a base land speed of 20 feet. Their fly speed is 90 feet, with average maneuverability.
- +1 natural armor.
- Natural attacks: A flying aarakocra can attack with two talons, dealing 1d4 points of damage each, or he can use a weapon in his talons. An aarakocra on the ground can wield weapons in his wing-claws at his base attack bonus and

## PLACES IN DARK SUN

The following terms appear in various places throughout this article. The short definitions here are further expanded upon in *DUNGEON* #110.

- **Athas:** The world of the DARK SUN campaign setting. It is a desert planet where magic is relatively rare and psionics are as common as heat and sand.
- **City-States:** Seven independent cities, each a small nation unto itself. Six are ruled by dragon-kings and the seventh, Tyr, is called a free city. The cities are Balic, Draj, Gulg, Nibenay, Raam, Tyr, and Urik.
- **Crimson Savannah:** Beyond the Jagged Cliffs is the home of the Kreen Empire, a vast swath of land with reddish soil.
- **Cromlin:** This is a village of silt-skimming sailors on the shores of the Sea of Silt. It is an unruly place, home to those unfit for city life.
- **Forest Ridge:** Likely the largest forest on Athas, Forest Ridge lies just west of the Ringing Mountains and is home to the halfling town of Ogo.
- **Hinterlands:** The uncharted and mostly unknown areas beyond the Ringing Mountains and Forest Ridge. Few who attempt to travel there make it, and fewer still return.
- **Jagged Cliffs:** An area north of the Tablelands and west of the Forest Ridge, this area is infested with halflings.
- **Ledopolus:** The independent towns of North and South Ledopolus form the ancestral home of dwarves. Its leaders are careful not to anger the nearby dragon-kings.
- **Ringing Mountains:** Massive, nearly impassable mountains that form most of the border separating the Tablelands region from the uncivilized Hinterlands.
- **Sea of Silt:** A vast ocean of silt and sand, the Sea stretches from the Tablelands and defines its eastern border. The people of Balic make their living sailing its shallower areas.
- **Tablelands:** What little civilization there is on Athas is concentrated in the 1,000,000 square-mile area called the Tablelands.
- **Tyr Region:** The area around the city-state of Tyr.

## DARK SUN WITHOUT PSIONICS

If you want to run a DARK SUN campaign without psionics, you can do so simply by ignoring the references to psionics in the rules presented here. In that case, also remove the elans and maenads from the world, but retain the level adjustments for the races you play with.

attack with his bite as a secondary attack, dealing 1d3 points of damage.

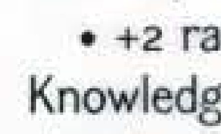
- Weapon Proficiency: Aarakocras are proficient with the javelin. Aarakocras learn to use these throwing weapons at an early age.
- +2 racial bonus on Craft (any one), Knowledge (nature), Listen, and Spot checks. Aarakocras spend a great deal of their time hunting, building nests, and making tools.
- Claustrophobic: Aarakocras suffer a -4 penalty on all attack rolls and skill checks when in an enclosed area.
- Inborn Power: Aarakocras gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest *elfsight*. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Aarakocras use their inborn power at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as psion or psychic warrior that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.
- Automatic Languages: Aarakocra and Common. Bonus Languages: Auran, Halfling, and Thri-Kreen.
- Favored Classes: Ranger.
- Level Adjustment: +2.

### ECL AND LA

A creature's effective character level (ECL) is the sum of its Hit Dice, level adjustment, and class levels. Use character level for all game functions except awarding experience, determining starting equipment, and determining how much experience the character needs to gain a new level. For all three of those functions, use effective character level instead.

Level adjustment (LA) is a measure of how much more powerful a creature is than other creatures of its Hit Dice. A level adjustment provides a numeric comparison with the seven standard races from the *Player's Handbook*, showing how much "more powerful" that creature is than one of the standard races, in terms of levels.

For more information on ECL and LA, see the *Monster Manual* glossary.



## Dwarves

On Athas, dwarves aren't subterranean miners. They are a long-lived but slowly dying race known for their relentless focus on a single task to the exclusion of all others.

**Personality:** How a dwarf behaves depends greatly on his focus, a single task that dominates every aspect of his life until it's completed. Each dwarf has a focus that guides his actions during every waking moment. A focus is usually a specific goal, such as "dig a new irrigation ditch," "convince the merchants of House Stel to improve our trade terms," or "slay the gaj that's been terrorizing our outpost."

If you're roleplaying a dwarf, you should be able to describe your current focus in a single sentence without a moment's hesitation. You can change your focus anytime you like simply by telling the DM, although most dwarves don't change their focus until the task is completed or it's apparent that it never will be completed. Think carefully about choosing a focus that'll make your goals diverge from those of the other PCs. Your focus should make for interesting roleplaying, but it shouldn't form a wedge between you and the other players.

**Physical Description:** Dwarves tend to be shorter and stockier than humans, but their eye, skin and hair color falls into the same ranges as humans. Adult male dwarves all have beards, although most keep them closely trimmed.

**Relations:** Dwarves categorize people according to their relation to their focuses, not by race, gender, or other characteristics. If someone can aid a dwarf in the resolution of his focus, he'll be at least marginally polite and helpful. However, standing between a dwarf and his focus makes the person an enemy, and not relating to his focus at all makes the being irrelevant.

**Alignment:** A dwarf's respect for those who fulfill their stated objectives gives most a lawful outlook.

**Dwarf Lands:** Dwarves are found intermingled with the human populations of the city-states; dwarves do not have communities to call their own anymore. The towns of Ledopolus are an ancestral home of the dwarves, so the dwarven population there is larger than it would be otherwise. In most city-states, dwarves congregate in certain neighborhoods to the exclusion of others.

**Religion:** Most dwarves worship one of the dragon-kings, although many heed the words of elemental clerics, especially those of earth and fire.

**Language:** Dwarves have overwhelmingly adopted the language of the humans they live with. They only use their ancestral language of Dwarven among each other and on ceremonial occasions.

**Names:** Dwarves once had an elaborate naming structure that detailed a particular dwarf's heritage by describing his ancestors. The naming system was unwieldy, however, so it has fallen into disuse, and dwarves have adopted human naming conventions.

**Adventurers:** Dwarven adventurers are driven by a focus that puts them in harm's way, such as "map the Jagged Cliffs region," "overthrow the dragon-king," or "make enough money to buy the freedom of my family."

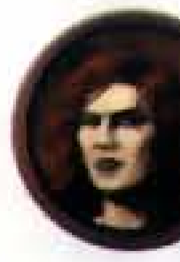
### Dwarf Racial Traits

Athasian dwarves have all the dwarven racial traits listed in the *Player's Handbook*, except as follows:

- +4 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma: Dwarves are stout and tough but tend to be gruff and reserved.
- Dwarves lose stonecunning, weapon familiarity, their +2 racial bonus on saving throws against poison, their +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against orcs, their +4 dodge bonus to Armor Class against giants, their +2 racial bonus on Appraise checks, and their +2 racial bonus on Craft checks.
- Inborn Power: Athasian dwarves gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest

*vigor*. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Dwarves use their inborn power at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as psion or psychic warrior that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.

- +2 racial bonus on saving throws against psionic powers, spells, and spell-like effects: Dwarves have an innate resistance to magic spells and psionic powers.
- Focus: Dwarves are notoriously single-minded, focusing on one task to the exclusion of others. This focus is something that can be simply stated, such as "overthrow the government," "get the caravan to Urik," or "find the twelve ruby chrysalises." Dwarves gain a +4 racial bonus on Will saves against charm or compulsion effects that would change, delay, or distract from their focus.
- Dwarven Blood: Dwarves are resistant to venoms and toxins, getting a +4 racial bonus on Fortitude saving throws against poison.
- Automatic Languages: Dwarven and Common. Bonus Languages: Terran.
- Favored Class: Cleric.
- Level Adjustment: +1.



## Elans

Originally created as a secret network of court agents by a powerful society of psions known as The Order, elans are not born; they are made. It is said that The Order erred when it created the first elans because it gave them too much free will. Some elan enclaves still owe allegiance to The Order, although the group was factionalized and driven underground after a failed plot a century ago. Other elans have turned their backs on The Order and are determined to forge their own destinies in the harsh lands of Athas. The average Athasian has never heard of an elan, but most noble families, merchant houses, and high-ranking templars have learned of their existence within the last few years.

Elans all have one thing in common: previous lives as humans. A special elan council screens living humans from a pool of applicants who've volunteered to make the transition into elans. Those who pass muster undergo a secret psionic process in one of several hidden elan enclaves, where organic life transitions to psionically-energized animation. Newly created elans retain the basic memories and personalities of their previous lives, but they keep none of their class skills, powers or spells (if any), or previous class abilities. Elans are a secretive lot in this regard, and they do not publicly reveal their enclaves or places of making. If one is to become elan, he is usually selected. Thus, elans do not reproduce biologically, but rather psionically, through the *transition life* power. Even then, their "children" are usually fully-grown adult humans. Nonhuman elans are never created, and it could be that the *transition life* power simply doesn't work for any other creatures but those who were originally human.

**Personality:** Elans are nearly as adaptable, flexible, and ambitious as the humans from which they are made. Because their state of existence sometimes leads other races to think the worst of them, elans practice a certain restraint, especially in regards to their origin. Otherwise, their personalities vary widely.

**Physical Description:** Elans typically stand just under 6 feet tall and weigh about 180 pounds, with men sometimes taller and heavier than women, but not always. Because new elans are selected, those who choose currently favor elans with pale skin, reddish hair, and a youthful quality. However, the first elans vary in looks as widely as humans. Elans dress in the styles similar to humans, including the adoption of unusual hairstyles, fanciful clothes, tattoos, body piercing, and the like. Elans have unlimited lifespans—as long as they are not destroyed, their mental arts could conceivably continually energize and rebuild their bodies for over a thousand years.

### RACIAL ABILITY ADJUSTMENTS

| Race | LA | Racial HD | Ability Adjustments | Favored Class |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aarakocra | +2 | — | +4 Dexterity, -2 Strength | Ranger |
| Dwarf | +1 | — | +4 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma | Cleric |
| Elan | +1 | — | +2 Wisdom | Psion |
| Elf | +1 | — | +4 Dexterity, -2 Constitution | Rogue |
| Half-elf | +1 | — | +2 Dexterity | Any |
| Half-giant | +1 | — | +2 Strength, +2 Constitution, -2 Dexterity | Barbarian |
| Halfling | +1 | — | +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom | Druid |
| Human | +1 | — | +2 any score, +2 any other score | Any |
| Maenad | +1 | — | +2 Strength, +4 Charisma | Wilder |
| Mul | +1 | — | +2 Strength, +4 Constitution | Fighter |
| Pterran | +2 | — | +2 Strength, +2 Constitution, -2 Wisdom | Barbarian |
| Thri-kreen | +2 | 2 | +2 Strength, +4 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, -2 Intelligence, -4 Charisma | Psychic warrior |

However, The Order only recently established the first elan enclaves, so no known elans are more than twenty-five years old (not counting their time as humans).

Elans do not sleep as members of other races do. Instead, an elan meditates in a deep trance for 4 hours a day. An elan resting in this fashion gains the same benefit that a human does from 8 hours of sleep. While in trance, an elan concentrates on suffusing his body with psionic energy, healing the hurts and random lacerations of the day, and restoring animation and resiliency to his tissues.

**Relations:** Elans mix well with members of other races, especially humans. It is probable that their relations would undergo a shift should their true nature become widely known, so one of the essential tenets of elan existence is secrecy.

**Alignment:** Elans tend toward no particular alignment, not even neutrality. The best and the worst are found among them.

**Elan Lands:** Wherever humans are found, there, too, are elans.

**Religion:** Some elans revere the dragon-queen Lalali-Puy because the city of Gulg has the oldest and largest elan enclave. Newer elan enclaves are less likely to serve a dragon-king or elemental power, as they feel that any grace or continued existence they might hope for will depend on their own efforts and continual mastery of inborn psionic talent.

**Language:** Elans speak Common. They typically learn other languages, including obscure ones, and they are fond of sprinkling their speech with words borrowed from other tongues: Pterran curses, Elven musical expressions, Thri-Kreen military phrases, and so on.

**Names:** Elan names vary greatly and often are simply the same as the human name they possessed before they crossed into their new existence. This is particularly true when an elan wishes to pick up his old life where he left off. Others view their second chance at existence as an opportunity to start anew and might pick completely new names.

On the other hand, titles are important to the elan, although they are used only among themselves. Freshly transitioned elans have the title of Newmade, those who have had at least a few years of animate "life" have the title Made, and those over two decades old have the title of Eternal. Those that belong to the group that chooses new elans have the title of Culler (although any elan who knows the power *transition life* might take this title, whether part of the Culler Council or not).

**Adventurers:** Elan adventurers are akin to humans in their daring and ambition. Because some effects that afflict other races leave elans unscathed, they sometimes seem extraordinarily brave to those who do not know the secret of their existence.

### Elan Racial Traits

Athasian elans have all the elan racial traits listed in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook,* except as follows:

- +2 Wisdom. The selection process that creates elans favors those who demonstrate keen perception and insight.
- Automatic Language: Common. Bonus Languages: Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic).
- Favored Class: Psion.
- Level Adjustment: +1.

## Elves

On Athas, elves have pointed ears and dwell in the wilderness, but comparisons to traditional fantasy elves end there. The elves of DARK SUN are clannish, nomadic desert-dwellers said to be as fast—and as mercurial—as the sirocco.

Elves are tireless wanderers, scouring the desert sands for whatever sustenance and riches they can find. They travel on foot in tribal groups, engaging in thieving and raiding, then disappear in a cloud of dust. Some tribes trade on a more-or-less regular basis with the city-states, but elves are known for their willingness to fleece customers not of their tribe.

**Personality:** An elf would rather live a short, happy life among friends than toil for centuries like a dwarf. Many take a perverse pride in the stereotype that labels them as untrustworthy thieves and bandits. Most are possessed by an incurable wanderlust, always moving on to see what lies beyond the next ridge—or what's in the poorly guarded caravan approaching from the west.

**Physical Description:** Elves are tall and lean beyond what would be possible for humans, but their slim frames hide a deceptive, wiry strength. Both males and females wear their hair long. Facial hair never grows on their pale skin. They favor voluminous robes that protect them from the wind and sand.

**Relations:** It is said that the only thing harder than finding an elf you can trust is finding an elf who trusts you. Elves either ignore or hold in contempt those not of their tribe, especially nonelves. An elf living among other races carefully tests the friendship of would-be allies before letting his guard down.

**Alignment:** Elves tend strongly toward chaotic alignments. Whether elves are good or evil depends on what's standing between them and their next drink of water.

**Elven Lands:** Some elven tribes have taken up residence in the city-states—usually in their own ghetto—but most roam the sandy wastes, coming into the cities only to trade. Many tribes of elven bandits congregate along major trade routes where they can pick off heavily laden caravans.

**Religion:** Few elves serve the dragon-kings—or anyone else for that matter. Many of the larger tribes have druids that provide a measure of spiritual guidance, and clerics of fire and earth aren't unheard of either.

**Language:** Elven is the elves' native tongue, a vowel-heavy language with a singsong quality. Most elves speak at least a smattering of Common as well, whether to demand valuables from bandit victims or strike a better deal in a city-state's bazaar.

**Names:** Elves take a simple name in their own language, and among the tribe they'll append a descriptive term, such as "Vilyaa the Tall," if a particularly common name is causing confusion. Elves separated from their tribe often take the tribe's name as a de facto last name. Tribe names include Night Runners, Silt Stalkers, Silver Hands, Sky Singers, Water Hunters, and Wind Dancers. Many elven names have doubled vowels, indicating that the vowel sound is stretched out slightly.

**Adventurers:** An elf's wanderings often develop into adventures whether he likes it or not. Some elves can't resist the temptation to fleece locals as they travel, while others find themselves the target of prejudiced harassment.

### Elf Racial Traits

Athasian elves have all the elven racial traits listed in the *Player's Handbook,* except as follows:

- +4 Dexterity, -2 Constitution: Elves are graceful but frail. An elf's grace makes her naturally better at stealth and archery.
- Elves lose their +2 racial bonus against enchantment.
- Elf base land speed is 40 feet. At 10th level, it increases to 50 feet.
- Elf-Running: Athasian elves gain Endurance as a bonus feat, for they are accomplished long-distance runners.
- Inborn Power: Athasian elves gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest their *conceal thoughts* power. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Elves use their inborn power at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as psion or psychic warrior that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.
- Weapon Proficiency: Elves receive the Martial Weapon Proficiency feats for the falchion, rapier, scimitar, longbow (including composite longbow), and shortbow (including composite shortbow) as bonus feats. Elves esteem the arts of swordplay and archery, so all elves are familiar with these weapons.
- +2 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks. At 5th level, these racial bonuses increase to +4, and at 15th level these racial bonuses increase to +6.
- Elven Discernment: Elves are highly attuned to their environment, and they have an instinctive sense that detects when things are out of place. Elves gain a +2 bonus on saves against illusion spells and effects.
- Automatic Languages: Elven and Common. Bonus Languages: Gith and Pterran.
- Favored Class: Rogue.
- Level Adjustment: +1.

## Half-Elves

The half-elves of Athas have no true home: They are regarded as outsiders in both the human-dominated city-states and the elven tribes of the wilderness. Unlike their parents, half-elves have no culture or community to call their own, but the flip side to being an outsider is being able to come and go as you please. Just to get through the day in a world that regards them as half-breed mongrels, half-elves have become adept socially, using keen perception and a diplomatic demeanor to deflect prejudice.

**Personality:** Most half-elves grew up as orphans or in broken homes, and most live uneasy lives in human or elven communities that don't truly accept them. Thus, a half-elf tends to be very loyal when he makes friends.

**Physical Description:** Half-elves look like thin humans with slightly pointed ears.

**Relations:** Half-elves generally get along well with most other races, especially muls and half-giants, their fellow crossbreeds. They often grow frustrated with human and elven prejudice.

**Alignment:** Half-elves have no affinity for a particular alignment.

**Half-Elven Lands:** Because they have a hard time keeping up with elven tribes in the wilderness, most half-elves live in the human city-states. They are too widely scattered to form their own communities, instead living as best they can within human society.

**Religion:** There are more half-elves than one might expect among the ranks of the templars, because a regimented life spent in dragon-king worship avoids

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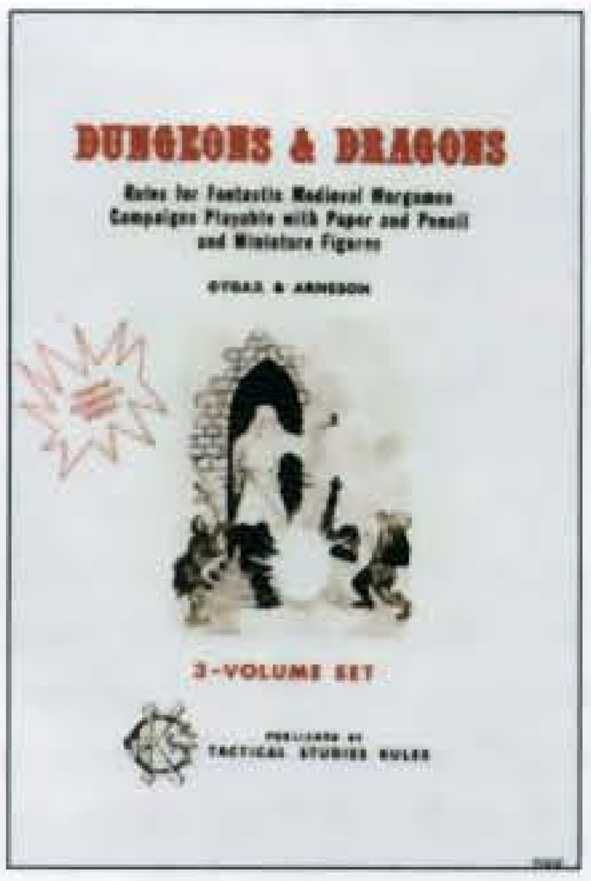
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many of the day-to-day difficulties of being a half-elf. Those half-elves who embrace their outcast nature often become elemental clerics, because fire, wind, water, and earth regard half-elves for who they are, not for who their parents were.

**Language:** Half-elves speak Common. Those with connections to the elven tribe of a parent learn Elven as well.

**Names:** Half-elves adopt the naming conventions of whatever society they live in.

**Adventurers:** Almost by definition, half-elves have to make their own way in the world, without a family or community to help them. Thus, the adventurer's life appeals to many.

### Half-Elf Racial Traits

Athasian half-elves have all the half-elven racial traits listed in the *Player's Handbook,* except as follows:

- +2 Dexterity. Half-elves gain some of the agility of their elven parents.
- Half-elves lose their +2 bonus against enchantment effects.
- Immunity to *sleep* effects.
- Inborn Power: Athasian half-elves gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest their *psionic charm* power. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Half-elves use their inborn powers at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as psion or psychic warrior that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.

At 5th level, half-elves gain an additional 3 psionic power points and the *detect hostile intent* power. At 10th level, half-elves gain an additional 5 psionic power points and the *danger sense* power. At 15th level, half-elves gain an additional 7 psionic power points and the *aura sight* power. As with other inborn powers, if the half-elf character has psionic classes that provide knowledge of higher-level powers, simply combine the power points and inborn powers known with those attained from the class.

- +2 racial saving throw bonus against illusion spells or effects, due to the discernment that is part of their elven heritage.
- Automatic Languages: Common. Bonus Languages: Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic).
- Favored Class: Any.
- Level Adjustment: +1.

## Half-Giants

Half-giants were force-bred into existence by the cruel dragon-kings. Intended as a force of gigantic warriors and laborers, half-giants are crosses between humans and giants. With the creation of their race came also the inception of strife, as with any people kept in bondage. Some half-giants found that a relic of their forced breeding had engendered within them a spark of secret power. So it is that some half-giants flee their circumstances and seek new lands where they are free to discover their own destinies.

**Personality:** For the most part, half-giants retain human sensibilities. They are curious, interested in cooperation and communication, and tend to be kind (of course, there are exceptions). Because many half-giants are refugees from their former days of bondage, where they could pass down few traditions, they are quick to pick up the local tastes, morals, customs, and habits of the area in which they settle down.

**Physical Description:** Half-giants typically stand from 7 to 8 feet tall and weigh from 250 to 400 pounds, with men noticeably taller and heavier than women. Most half-giants have tightly braided black hair with deep coppery complexions. Half-giants often effect grandiose dress when they can afford to do so, sporting fanciful or intimidating clothing. Half-giants have longer lifespans than humans, achieving adulthood at about age 20 and usually living a little over a century.

**Relations:** Most other humanoids are put off by half-giants, due to their abnormally large size. However, assuming introductions can be made without violence, many find half-giants of good alignments to be outgoing, kind creatures.

**Alignment:** Half-giants have a slight tendency toward good alignments, but as always, there are bad apples whose hearts have been twisted by slavery.

**Half-Giant Lands:** Enslaved half-giants live in the human cities, where most are the property of templars. Those who've escaped or were born free tend to live in settlements in the deepest parts of hot deserts.

**Religion:** Freed half-giants, as a race, have a particular disdain for religion, sometimes going out of their way to speak badly of a dragon-king. It's not that they don't believe; it's that they don't believe that a dragon-king has the best interests of its worshipers at heart. Half-giants still in bondage openly worship the dragon-king who rules them; some truly believe in their hearts while others just go through the motions.

**Language:** Half-giants speak Common, plus any languages their masters taught them or that they learned in the wild.

**Names:** Half-giants have a childhood name and a given name, usually given by friends or the community in which the half-giant grew up. Most half-giant names reflect some aspect of the desert that half-giants inhabit, although a few place names are sometimes thrown in.

**Adventurers:** Half-giants have wandered far to found their current desert settlements. For many, wanderlust is a way of life, and seeking after glory, fortune, or even a life of high adventure is something every half-giant can understand and accept. Most half-giants, however, are content to stay in their settlements and listen to the tales of faraway lands from those who've adventured there.

### Half-Giant Racial Traits

Athasian half-giants have all the half-giant racial traits listed in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook,* except as follows:

- Automatic Language: Common. Bonus Languages: Dwarven and Giant.
- Favored Class: Barbarian.
- Level Adjustment: +1.

## Halflings

Feral creatures who live in the few forests remaining in the world of DARK SUN, the halflings of Athas are out of place in the city-states of the Tablelands. Yet, like how a wild creature held in a zoo can adapt to its surroundings, so too can a halfling find adventure in the cities, as well as the deserts, of DARK SUN.

**Personality:** Stories, song, and fine arts are of paramount importance to halflings, who have a rich oral history and collection of mythic tales. Halflings often feel sorry for creatures who have to scrabble madly for water and food, as they have little difficulty obtaining either in their forest homes. This attitude sometimes appears patronizing to others.

**Physical Description:** Halfling physiology is as described in the *Player's Handbook*. On Athas, many halflings decorate their skin with war-paint, tattoos, and piercings.

**Relations:** Halflings have a mixture of pity and curiosity about the people of the city-states, but they're socially aware enough to realize that they will always be a novelty to the larger races. After they've been among humans and other races for a while, most halflings overhear enough tales about cannibal halflings to last a lifetime. However, most don't foul their dealings with those they meet by telling them that most of those stories are true.

**Alignment:** Halflings have no particular alignment preference, although those who travel to the city-states have a tendency to be more chaotic than those who remain in their forest homes.

**Halfling Lands:** Halflings are native to the Forest Ridge, a wooded mountain range northwest of the city-states. There the halflings have many villages and even larger settlements.

**Religion:** Halflings let their village druids tend to their spiritual needs, although elemental clerics are not unheard of. Rare indeed is the halfling who venerates a dragon-king.

**Language:** Halflings speak their own language. Those who travel to the city-states pick up at least conversational Common from traveling merchants and other envoys from the Tablelands.

**Names:** Halfling names reflect their tribal heritage, full of aggressive consonants and references to the natural world. Common appellations include Windborne Garkala, Kaishak Treetopper, and Shethac Two-Streams.

**Adventurers:** Halflings usually have a reason for leaving their forest homes beyond "I'm looking for adventure." Some are voluntary exiles, others are (or were) attached to diplomatic or trading missions, and some are on the run from a dark fate that awaits them back in the forest.

### Halfling Racial Traits

Athasian halflings have all the halfling racial traits listed in the *Player's Handbook*, except as follows:

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom: Halflings are quick, agile, and good with ranged weapons. They also tend to be perceptive and strong-willed.
- Inborn Power: Halflings gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest their *missive* power. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Halflings use their inborn power at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as psion or psychic warrior that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.
- +2 racial bonus on Climb, Jump, and Move Silently checks: Halflings are agile, surefooted, and athletic. At 5th level, these bonuses increase to +4. At 10th level, a halfling can make a standing long jump as if it were a running long jump and can engage in accelerated climbing without suffering the -5 penalty. At 15th level, the Climb, Jump, and Move Silently racial bonuses increase to +8.
- Automatic Languages: Halfling and Common. Bonus Languages: Aarakocran, Ancient Halfling, and Pterran.
- Favored Class: Druid.
- Level Adjustment: +1.

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## Humans

Humans are the dominant culture in the explored parts of Athas. Among the races, they are known for their versatility and willingness to adapt to the harsh realities of life on Athas.

**Personality:** Humans tend to be ambitious and individualistic; even the tyranny of the dragon-kings hasn't stamped out human diversity. Other races often don't know what to expect when meeting a human for the first time, because predicting their behavior based on cultural norms is difficult. "It's human nature," they say with a shrug whenever humans take some action for no apparent reason.

**Physical Description:** Humans on Athas tend to be dark-skinned with brown or black hair, although exceptions exist. Templar and noble humans tend to display the greatest variety of hair and skin coloration.

**Relations:** Humans tend to get along well with the races they comingle with (dwarves, muls, elans, and maenads), although their friendly attitude sometimes seems patronizing. Half-giants and thri-kreen are regarded as somewhat fearsome and dangerous. Elves, and to a lesser degree half-elves, are considered flighty and untrustworthy. Aarakocras, halflings, and pterrans are viewed as fascinating and exotic.

**Alignment:** Humans have no natural alignment tendencies, although the culture of each city-state pressures its inhabitants to adopt the alignment of its dragon-king.

**Human Lands:** Most humans live in one of the seven city-states: Balic, Draj, Gulg, Nibenay, Raam, Tyr, and Urik. Others live in the smaller outposts and communities near oases in the desert, and some few are part of hunter-gatherer tribes in the heart of the wasteland.

**Religion:** Most humans worship (or at least venerate) the dragon-king of the city-state where they live. Some few follow the teachings of elemental clerics or join the druids in their nature-worship.

**Language:** Humans speak Common, the trade tongue, which is by far the most prevalent language on Athas. Most can read and write—even slaves are taught basic literacy so they can read various signs and inscriptions.

**Names:** For most humans, a single name suffices. Templars often take an honorific based on their rank in the religious hierarchy. Nobles also have a family name, which is generally referred to after the word "of," as in "Agis of Asticles." Members of a merchant house take the house's name as their own last name. Freemen occasionally refer to their occupations to avoid confusion, as in "Barek the Weaver."

**Adventurers:** Human adventurers tend to be daring and relentless no matter why they're adventuring—whether for fame, fortune, or belief in a cause. Their versatility makes them suited to any class.

### Human Racial Traits

Athasian humans have all the human racial traits listed in the *Player's Handbook*, except as follows:

- +2 any ability score, +2 any other ability score. As the most varied race, humans have no consistent racial modifiers, but every human has some innate talent.
- Inborn Powers: Humans gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. Humans may choose any 1st-level power from the psion/wilder power list to become their inborn power, which they can manifest using their power points. Only humans have the ability to choose—the other races' choices are predetermined. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Humans use their inborn powers at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class, such as psion or psychic warrior, that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.

  At 5th level, humans gain an additional 3 psionic power points and a 2nd-level power from the psion power list. At 10th level, humans gain an additional 5 psionic power points and a 3rd-level power from the psion power list. At 15th level, humans gain an additional 7 psionic power points and a 4th-level power from the psion power list. As with other inborn powers, if the human character has psionic classes that provide knowledge of higher-level powers, simply combine the power points and inborn powers known with those attained from the class.
- Automatic Language: Common. Bonus Languages: Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic).
- Favored Class: Any.
- Level Adjustment: +1.

## Maenads

Maenads are a race of wildly emotional creatures who are known for the rare times that their legendary restraint breaks, allowing a flood of emotional turmoil to surface, often in acts of stunning bravery or violence. Maenads have a strong martial bent, useful for venting the emotional boil they constantly keep at bay.

Maenads know not the source of the spiritual anger they all keep bottled away, but part of it is undoubtedly that, as a race, they were trapped on a featureless demiplane of crystal and dust by a higher power. Early in the year of Priest's Contemplation, the dragon-king Andropinus escaped from his banishment to The Black (described in the Athasian Cosmology section in *DUNGEON* #110), bringing with him an army of maenads he discovered during his imprisonment. At first, the maenad legions conquered the city-state of Balic in Andropinus' name, but they have since spread across the Tablelands. Not all owe allegiance to Andropinus anymore, as the dragon-king seems more interested in reestablishing his control over his old subjects than considering the welfare of those he brought to Athas. Many maenads who regarded Andropinus as a savior are now disillusioned by his cruelty and saddened by the harsh land that is their new home.

**Personality:** Maenads seem discreet and calm, even restrained and undemonstrative, unwilling to use a sentence where a word will do, and happier with a gesture if words can be dispensed with altogether. Their apparent calm is at odds with their more fiery reputation. However, in order to maintain a life in civilized lands and even (or especially) among themselves, maenads must practice a discipline of mental calm, lest the furies of their racial memory break forth. They are slow to make friends for this reason, but come to regard as family those that understand and accept them despite their occasional lapses.

**Physical Description:** Maenads are tall and have a wiry strength, standing about 5 1/2 to 6 1/2 feet tall, and typically weighing 145 to 220 pounds. Maenad men are the same height as, and only marginally heavier than, maenad women. Maenads have no facial or body hair, but usually wear the dark hair on their heads long and braided. Their skin is dusted with a peculiar sparkle, as of gem dust, giving them a striking luster in the right light. This sparkle is a natural component of their skin, which is flecked with tiny living crystals. Maenads possess grace and fine features. They prefer heavier clothes, and armor, if possible. A maenad achieves adulthood at about 25 years of age and can live to be over 150 years old.

**Relations:** Maenads are most comfortable with humans, finding their various temperaments similar to their own. They respect the dwarven ability to hold a grudge, but they find halflings rather silly. The other races they take as they find them, although maenads are particularly taken with elves, because the unconscious elven lightness of being is a balm to the maenad spirit. Maenads don't dislike aarakocras or thri-kreen, but they have a hard time understanding their ways.

**Alignment:** Maenads know that self-control is their best method of living a fulfilling life. Thus, they lean strongly toward law. Generally, they value and protect others' self control as well as their own, and so are more often good than not.

**Maenad Lands:** Maenads mostly live near Balic in communities of less than three hundred, where their well-hidden villages blend into the desert wastes. They hunt game and are beginning to work small farms on the fringe of Andropinus' territory.

Maenads encountered in other lands are usually refugees, warriors for hire, or adventurers.

**Religion:** Some maenads still serve Andropinus, while others respond to the entreaties of the druids or of elemental clerics. Water clerics are particularly welcome among the maenads, for maenad elders say their original homeland was an archipelago teeming with life and sun.

**Language:** Maenads speak Maenadi, a language of strict grammar. Chants play an important part in their songmaking and literature. They have their own script, which looks surprisingly similar to Elven.

**Names:** Maenad names are given and used much like human names. Every maenad has at least one given name, and a family name.

**Adventurers:** Maenads take up adventuring out of a desire to travel and see more of the world. Moreover, some maenads tend to get along easier with other races less given to inner rage than themselves. However, maenads also are adept with the sword and some psionic power, and adventuring allows them to utilize these skills.

### Maenad Racial Traits

Athasian maenads have all the maenad racial traits listed in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook,* except as follows:

- +2 Strength, +4 Charisma. Maenads tend to be physically fit, and they have forceful personalities.
- Automatic Languages: Maenadi, Common. Bonus Language: Elven.
- Favored Class: Wilder.
- Level Adjustment: +1.

## Muls

Sterile crossbreeds of humans and dwarves, muls have great stamina. Accordingly, the templars, noble families, and merchant houses breed them as slaves. Many of the same attributes that make them effective manual laborers serve them well in gladiator arenas.

**Personality:** Muls often have gruff, taciturn personalities, seen as a sort of

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social defense mechanism in the slave pits most call home. Many lash out in spite whenever they can avoid the consequences, having never known a friend or companion. Those muls who have escaped the toil of the typical slave (usually by excelling as a gladiator, being set free, or escaping) handle social situations better, but most remain wary of strangers and anyone who hasn't proven their trustworthiness.

**Physical Description:** Muls have a fast metabolism, so most of them are squat and muscular, with broad shoulders and very little body fat. Were it not for their pronounced brow ridges, slightly pointed ears, and lack of body hair, they could pass for human.

**Relations:** Muls are somewhat antisocial, but they don't have a particular enmity for any race. They get along slightly better with their forebears (humans and dwarves) and half-giants, who are often fellow slaves.

**Alignment:** The taskmaster's whip has instilled a lawful attitude in most muls, although those who have fled from slavery are usually chaotic (ex-slaves almost always have a hard time with authority figures). Mul slaves who are treated poorly—which are almost all of them—can nurture such hatred and spite in their hearts that they become evil.

**Mul Lands:** Muls have no culture of their own; they're entirely products of the city-states where they're bred. Some escaped slaves make a home for themselves among the desert tribes, but because no mul can start a family, they have no place to call their own.

**Religion:** Most muls are heavily indoctrinated into the worship of whichever dragon-king rules the city-state where they were born. Like half-giants, some enthusiastically take to the state religion, while others curse it under their breath each day.

**Language:** Muls are taught Common in the slave pits. If they learn other languages, it's often from captured slaves.

**Names:** Muls favor one simple name, generally a human one. They don't have families, so they don't take last names except in unusual circumstances. To avoid confusion, some muls will add an appellation such as "Rikus the Gladiator" or "Kalaa the Stone-Grinder."

**Adventurers:** Muls generally come to the adventurer's lifestyle in one of three ways. Some escape slavery and must remain one step ahead of their former masters. Others win their freedom through luck or skill—often by success in the gladiator arena. Finally, some are former soldiers under the command of the dragon-kings or in the pay of the merchant houses.

### Mul Racial Traits

- +2 Strength, +4 Constitution. Muls are strong and known for their great stamina.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, muls have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Mul base land speed is 30 feet.
- Hardy: Muls need only half as much rest to eliminate the effects of fatigue and exhaustion.
- Faster Natural Healing. Muls heal damage at twice the normal rate, recovering 2 hit points per level per day. At 10th level they gain fast healing 1, and at 15th level they gain fast healing 3.
- Inborn Power: Muls gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest their *offensive prescience* power. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Muls use their inborn power at a manifester level equal to their character level. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as psion or psychic warrior that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.
- Automatic Language: Common. Bonus Language: Dwarven.
- Favored Classes: Fighter.
- Level Adjustment: +1.

## Pterrans

Reptilian creatures from the Hinterlands, pterrans are a rare sight among the city-states of Athas. A massive earthquake in the year of Desert's Fury shook pterran society out of its isolation; many young pterrans now leave their villages and explore the strange wonders of the rest of Athas.

**Personality:** Pterrans tend to be wary and subdued at first meeting, and most never get used to the stares of every passerby. Among other pterrans and trusted friends, though, most pterrans are open and caring. They have a subconscious politeness of demeanor, giving thanks for the smallest kindness.

**Physical Description:** Pterrans stand about 5 1/2 to 6 feet tall, and have light brown, scaly skin, three-fingered talonlike hands (with opposable thumbs) and three-toed feet. Vestigial leathery flaps of skin hang down under their thin arms. Their snouts are beaklike and long, and their narrow heads and long necks give them a birdlike profile.

**Relations:** Pterrans have been isolated long enough that they don't have any particular racial friendships or enmities, with two exceptions. The pterrans' villages have suffered from thri-kreen raider attacks of late, making the average pterran regard thri-kreen as dangerous bandits. Halfling culture and pterran culture have many parallel spiritual aspects, so pterrans get along well with halflings.

**Alignment:** Pterrans have an ingrained tendency to make sacrifices for the welfare of others, so most are good. They show no proclivity toward law or chaos.

**Pterran Lands:** Lost Scale and Pterran Vale are the two known pterran villages. All pterrans hail from there.

**Religion:** Pterran druids wield great spiritual influence in Lost Scale and Pterran Vale, and most pterrans celebrate the "Earth Mother" with brief prayers and ceremonies several times a day. Pterran travelers generally find worship of the dragon-kings distasteful, although they might swallow their abhorrence for the sake of politeness.

**Language:** Pterrans have their own tongue, but they're the only ones who use it. They've begun teaching Common to everyone in the community so they can better deal with the outside world.

**Names:** Pterrans use family names first, followed by a personal name that's often descriptive rather than abstract

(Ptellac Coldeye, for example, is the brother of Ptellac Greentail and Ptellac Flinttooth). Few Athasians understand the distinction, however, and call their pterran companions by their family names.

**Adventurers:** Pterran culture is actively sending out young members of the community to learn more about the world. Pterran PCs are likely part of this wave of travelers.

### Pterran Racial Traits

- +2 Strength, +2 Constitution, -2 Wisdom. Pterrans are physically powerful, but not particularly observant or willful.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, pterrans have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Reptilian: Pterrans have the reptilian subtype.
- Pterran base land speed is 30 feet.
- +5 natural armor bonus: The thick skin and scales of a pterran make them difficult to harm.
- Natural attacks: A pterran can attack with two talons, dealing 1d4 points of damage each, or he can use a weapon in his talons. He can also attack with his bite as a secondary attack, dealing 1d3 points of damage.
- Because of their tails, pterrans have a +4 racial bonus on Balance and Jump checks.
- Inborn Power: Pterrans gain 3 extra power points at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They can use the power points provided to manifest their *burst* power. If you take levels in a class that offers a repertoire of psionic powers, simply add the 3 power points to your power point total, and add your inborn power to your list of powers known. Pterrans use their inborn power at a manifester level equal to their character levels. They use Charisma to set the save DC unless they have levels in a psionic class such as psion or psychic warrior that uses a different ability score to set the DC. In that case, they choose either Charisma or the psionic class's relevant ability score to set the save DC.
- Automatic Languages: Pterran and Common. Bonus Languages: Giant and Gith.
- Favored Classes: Barbarian.
- Level Adjustment: +2.

## Thri-kreen

Mantislike creatures from the desert wastes, the thri-kreen are the most alien of the PC races in DARK SUN. They are pack predators with six limbs, a poison bite, and an obsession with hunting.

**Personality:** Thri-kreen have a pack mentality, and they're always concerned with their position in the "clutch." This makes them good team players, but a thri-kreen in charge expects his orders to be followed without question. Thri-kreen place great importance on knowing where their next meal is coming from. Because they wander in packs, thri-kreen rarely have any possessions they can't easily carry on their backs. They also don't object to eating other intelligent races if no other food source is available. Some thri-kreen hunting packs say elves are particularly delicious.

**Physical Description:** They have one set of legs they use for locomotion and two pairs of arms for manipulation. They have short antennae, multifaceted eyes, and a yellow, brown, or gray exoskeleton.

**Relations:** How a thri-kreen relates to others depends entirely on whether they're members of his clutch; thri-kreen apply notions of clutch allegiance to almost every social situation. A thri-kreen will leap to the defense of a clutchmate without question, but anyone outside the clutch is a potential rival.

**Alignment:** Thri-kreen respect the order of the clutch, so most tend toward a lawful alignment. Thri-kreen don't think of the world in the absolutes of good and evil as do other races, and so they have no tendency toward one or the other (nor even to neutrality).

**Thri-Kreen Lands:** Beyond the Jagged Cliffs, north of the city-states, are the great mantis-cities of the tohr-kreen, a settled, civilized group of thri-kreen. Most thri-kreen have no permanent communities, wandering wherever good hunting takes them.

**Religion:** Thri-kreen find worship of the dragon-kings puzzling, because the dragon-kings don't look after their worshipers the way a clutch leader should. Elemental clerics are respected for their power. Thri-kreen often come into conflict with druids; to a thri-kreen, the animals druids want to protect and preserve are merely tasty meals.

**Language:** Thri-kreen have no lips and a different tongue than humans have, so they can't make the following sounds: p, b, f, v, m. Their own language, Thri-Kreen, includes a series of clicks and pops that humans have a hard time imitating. Thri-kreen also supplement their verbal communication by emitting pheromones; the pheromone "vocabulary" has only vague, general meanings, but the faint smells enable thri-kreen to express fine shades of meaning and cultural idioms. Only creatures with scent can make out thri-kreen pheromones, and they only understand their meaning if they speak Thri-Kreen.

**Names:** Thri-kreen have single names that have many glottal stops (denoted with apostrophes) and hard consonant sounds.

**Adventurers:** Thri-kreen are well suited to the adventurer's life; they're mobile, effective in a fight, and they have a number of useful racial abilities. Furthermore, their clutch-based way of looking at social situations means that they fit in better with a small, egalitarian group than they do a large hierarchy or a teeming city-state.

### Thri-Kreen Racial Traits

- +2 Strength, +4 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, -2 Intelligence, -4 Charisma. Thri-kreen are strong and quick, but they think differently than most humanoids, and have a hard time relating to folk of other races.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, thri-kreen have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Thri-kreen base land speed is 40 feet.
- Immunity to *sleep*. Since thri-kreen do not sleep, they are immune to magic *sleep* effects. A thri-kreen spellcaster still requires 8 hours of rest before preparing spells.
- Darkvision: Thri-kreen can see in the dark up to 60 feet.
- +3 natural armor: A thri-kreen's exoskeleton is resistant to blows.
- Multiple Limbs: Thri-kreen have four arms, and can take the Multiweapon Fighting feat (see the *Monster Manual*)

instead of the Two-Weapon Fighting feat. Thri-kreen can also take the Multiattack feat. These are not bonus feats; thri-kreen characters must spend feat slots to learn these feats.

- Natural Attacks: Thri-kreen can attack with four claws and a bite. The claws deal 1d4 damage, and the bite is a secondary attack (-5 penalty on the attack roll, and half Strength bonus on the damage roll) that deals 1d4 damage. A thri-kreen can attack with a weapon (or multiple weapons) at the normal attack bonus and make either a bite or claw attack as a secondary attack. For example, a thri-kreen ranger with the Multiweapon Fighting feat and armed with three short swords could attack with all three swords at a -2 penalty (the normal penalty for fighting with multiple weapons while using light weapons in its off-hands), and also make a bite attack at a -5 penalty.
- Poison (Ex): Bite, initial damage 1d6 Dex, secondary damage paralysis, DC 11 + Con modifier. A thri-kreen produces sufficient poison for only one bite per day.
- Leap (Ex): Thri-kreen are natural jumpers. They gain a +30 racial bonus on Jump checks.
- Weapon Familiarity: The gythka and chatkcha are martial weapons for thri-kreen.
- Naturally Psionic: Thri-kreen gain 1 extra power point at 1st level, regardless of whether they choose a psionic class or not. They do not gain an inborn power as other races do, instead receiving a number of psi-like abilities.
- *Psi-like Abilities*: 3/day—*chameleon, know direction;* 1/day—*psionic displacement, metaphysical claw.* These abilities are as the powers manifested by a wilder of 1/2 the thri-kreen's Hit Dice (minimum 1st level).
- Monstrous Humanoid Hit Dice: Thri-kreen are 2 HD monstrous humanoids before adding any class levels. A thri-kreen character has 2d8 racial Hit Dice, and receives maximum hit points on his first racial Hit Die (but not his first class Hit Die). A thri-kreen's racial Hit Dice also provide a +2 base attack bonus and base saving throws of Fort +0, Ref +3, and Will +3.
- Racial Skills: A thri-kreen's monstrous humanoid Hit Dice grant him skill points equal to (2 + Int modifier, minimum 1) x 5. Class skills for these skill points are Balance, Climb, Hide, Jump, Listen, and Spot.
- Racial Feats: Thri-kreen gain Deflect Arrows as a racial bonus feat. A thri-kreen's monstrous humanoid levels grant it one feat (although thri-kreen with class levels gain feats based on its total Hit Dice, just like any other character).
- Thri-kreen receive a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in sandy or arid settings.
- Automatic Languages: Thri-Kreen and Common. Bonus Language: Giant and Halfling.
- Favored Class: Psychic warrior.
- Level Adjustment: +2. ◆

## AGING EFFECTS

| Race | Middle Age[1] | Old[2] | Venerable3 | Maximum Age |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aarakocra | 30 years | 50 years | 65 years | +2d10 years |
| Mul | 40 years | 53 years | 80 years | +1d10 years |
| Pterran | 30 years | 40 years | 50 years | +1d10 years |
| Thri-kreen | 25 years | 33 years | 40 years | +2d8 years |

1 At middle age, -1 to Str, Dex, and Con; +1 to Int, Wis, and Cha

2 At old age, -2 to Str, Dex, and Con; +1 to Int, Wis, and Cha

3 At venerable age, -3 to Str, Dex, and Con; +1 to Int, Wis, and Cha

Races from the *Player's Handbook* and *Expanded Psionics Handbook* are as listed in their respective rulebook.

## RANDOM STARTING AGES

| Race | Adulthood | All Classes |
|---|---|---|
| Aarakocra | 10 years | +1d4 |
| Mul | 15 years | +1d6 |
| Pterran | 12 years | +1d8 |
| Thri-kreen | 4 years | +1d4 |

Races from the *Player's Handbook* and *Expanded Psionics Handbook* are as listed in their respective rulebook.

## RANDOM HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

| Race | Base Height | Height Modifier | Base Weight | Weight Modifier |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aarakocra, male | 4'4" | +2d8 | 80 lb. | x (1d6) lb. |
| Aarakocra, female | 5'10" | +2d10 | 120 lb. | x (2d4) lb. |
| Mul, male | 5'2" | +2d10 | 200 lb. | x (2d4) lb. |
| Mul, female | 5'0" | +2d10 | 185 lb. | x (2d4) lb. |
| Pterran, male | 5'10" | +2d10 | 140 lb. | x (2d4) lb. |
| Pterran, female | 5'8" | +2d10 | 115 lb. | x (2d4) lb. |
| Thri-kreen, male | 5'10" | +2d10 | 160 lb. | x (2d4) lb. |
| Thri-kreen, female | 5'10" | +2d10 | 160 lb. | x (2d4) lb. |

Races from the *Player's Handbook* and *Expanded Psionics Handbook* are as listed in their respective rulebook.

# DARK SUN CLASSES

## Heroes of a Dying World

by David Noonan · illustrated by Todd Harris and Jason Engle

Players can choose from the base classes listed in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and the *Player's Handbook*. The unique nature of the DARK SUN setting leads to some changes to character classes.

### BARBARIAN

The two main sources of barbarian characters in the DARK SUN campaign are the slave tribes and hunter-gatherer cultures from beyond the Tablelands.

Slave tribes are groups of escaped slaves and their progeny; they live in the wastes between the city-states, desperately trying to eke out a living as they avoid recapture. Life among the slave tribes is brutal and frequently short. A barbarian PC might be the sole survivor of a natural disaster, slaver attack, or predation by Athas's fearsome monsters. He or she might be exiled from the tribe after a dispute with the chieftain or tribal elders. Because barbarian tribes are generally nomadic, a particular barbarian might return from a long

hunt or scouting expedition to simply find no trace of his or her tribe's encampment.

The forest ridges northwest of the Tyr region have some barbarian halfling tribes, and the Crimson Savannah further northwest is home to thri-kreen barbarians and tribes of other races. Due north of the Tablelands is the unknown; barbarian PCs could hail from there as well. Unlike members of slave tribes, these barbarians will likely be unfamiliar with the customs and power structure of the city-states. If you want to play a stranger-in-a-strange-land PC, choose a barbarian from beyond the Tyr region.

Barbarians otherwise function as described in the *Player's Handbook.*

## BARD

While rare, bards do exist on Athas in small, well-organized groups known as troupes. Most bard troupes make their members wealthy not by their frequent performances in the service of nobles and templars, but in their clandestine operations.

As arcane spellcasters with various other abilities, bards work hard to cover their magical abilities with their performances. Spending their lives hiding behind the façade of simple performers, bards learn the intricacies and techniques of covert activities, and as such make excellent spies and assassins. Bards try to keep their abilities secret, despite their fame and familiarity among nobles. Thus, the bard class is relatively unknown by most residents of Athas, as they are seen as mere performers.

Bards otherwise function as described in the *Player's Handbook.*

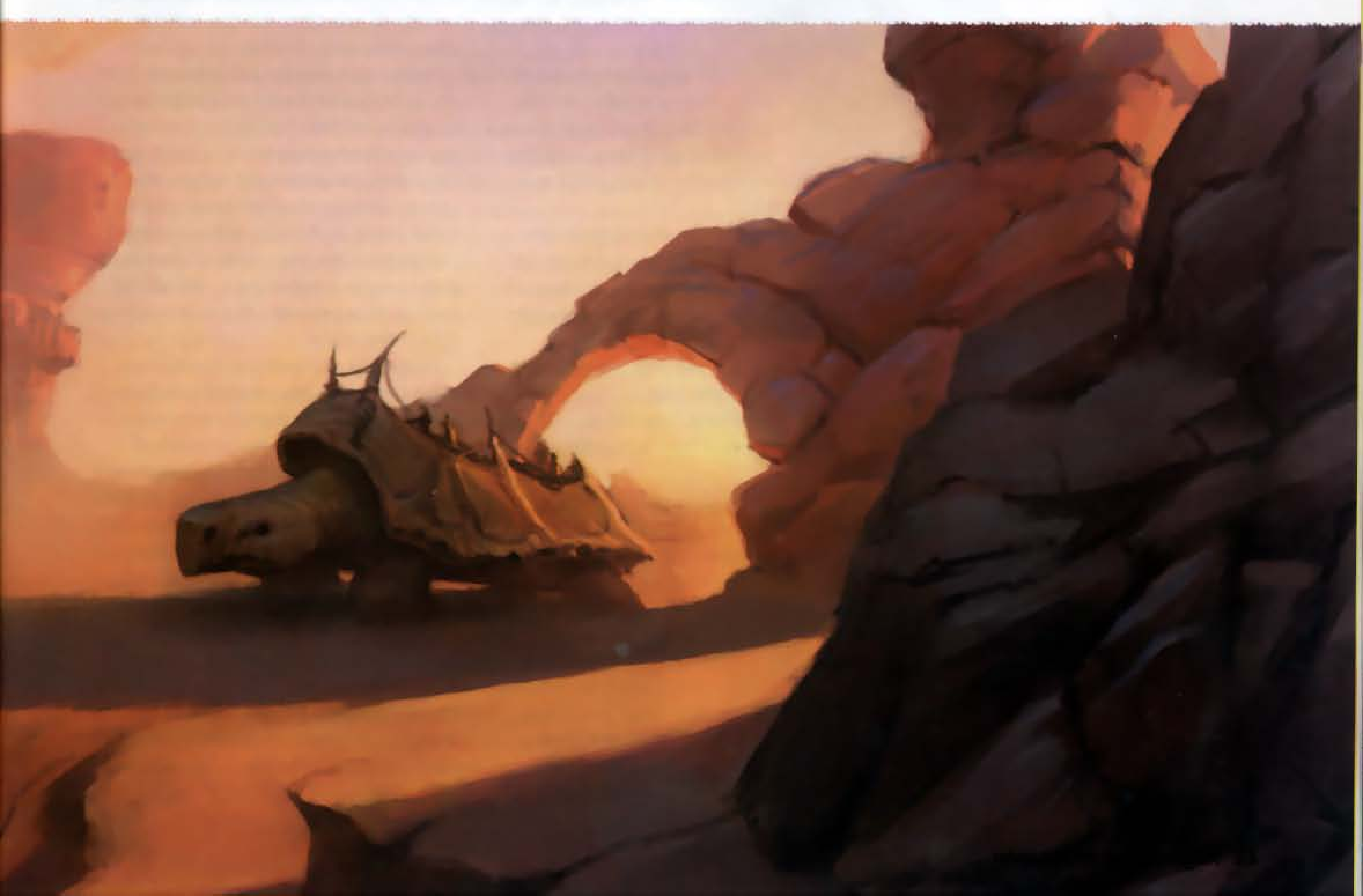
## CLERIC

Unlike most D&D campaigns, DARK SUN has no true gods. Instead, clerics draw their power from one of the elemental planes or a dragon-king. Some clerics treat their favored elemental power or dragon king with obeisance akin to worship, while others are more mercenary, describing their relationship in terms of power exchanged for fealty.

A cleric of a particular element must take Air, Earth, Fire, or Water as one of his domains and can choose any non-elemental domain as his other domain. Elemental clerics tend to be loners, preaching the power of the elements from the wilderness or the street corner. There isn't an organized hierarchy, and there aren't grand temples or cathedrals. Elemental clerics can be of any alignment.

Almost all PC clerics are elemental clerics. The stereotypical elemental cleric is a little crazy, and here's why: To make a pact with the elemental powers, a would-be cleric must put himself completely at the mercy of his chosen element. This means throwing himself off a tall cliff (air), being buried alive (earth), burning at the stake (fire), or falling down a well (water). Those who survive the experience—through direct intervention of an elemental power, obviously—become elemental clerics. Many supplicants fail to capture the attention of the elements and become just one more casualty of the harsh world of Athas.

Clerics of a dragon-king, commonly called templars, control the massive



### DRAGON-KING GRANTED DOMAINS

The dragon-kings of the city-states offer the following domains.

**Andropinus (Balic):** Evil, Law, Travel, War.

**Atzetuk (Draj):** Destruction, Evil, Magic, Sun.

**Dregoth (Raam):** Chaos, Death, Evil, Knowledge.

**Hamanu (Urik):** Evil, Law, Protection, Strength.

**Lalali-Puy (Gulg):** Evil, Healing, Law, Plant.

**Shadow King (Nibenay):** Chaos, Evil, Trickery, War.

bureaucracy that runs each city-state. The templars enforce the strict laws of the dragon-king, command the city guard, and otherwise project the will of the dragon-king. Because the dragon-kings are evil, most templars are evil as well, although some neutral templars exist. Depending on their rank within the city-state's bureaucracy, templars usually have a measure of legal authority. Most mid- to high-level templars have the authority to make arrests, seize property, and even render legal judgments on behalf of the dragon-king that rules the city. Even low-level templars can usually give orders to the city guard and arrest free citizens who aren't nobles or merchants.

Dragon-kings don't respond to prayers or grant spells to individual clerics the way most D&D deities do. Each dragon-king controls a conduit to the elemental planes and can grant or deny a templar access to spells with a simple ritual. However, a dragon-king isn't aware of which spells a particular templar is preparing. Dragon-kings can only grant or deny access to the conduit—they don't directly control how the energy passing through the conduit is used.

Clerics otherwise function as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

### DRUID

Druids are highly organized in the DARK SUN setting, forming an underground religion that stands in opposition to the dragon-kings and templars. They have major shrines in the wilderness and form revolutionary cells in the cities.

The DARK SUN game has druids that patrol a specific territory and druids who wander Athas, healing the land as they can. PC druids are generally in the latter camp, but they can expect at least a degree of aid from other druids (how much aid depends on how well they're known in druidic circles).

**Animal Companion:** A druid may begin play with an animal companion selected from the following list: baazrag, kank, kes'trekel, snake (Small or Medium viper), and yallix.

A druid of 4th level or higher can select an animal from the following list: erdlu, jhakar, monitor lizard, seskarran, and snake (constrictor or Large viper). Doing so adjusts her druid level down by 3 for purposes of determining the companion's characteristics and special abilities.

A druid of 7th level or higher can select an animal from the following list: boneclaw baazrag, crodlu, pterrax, razorwing, and snake (Huge viper). Doing so adjusts her druid level down by 6 for purposes of determining the companion's characteristics and special abilities.

A druid of 10th level or higher can select a cilops, heavy crodlu, or inix. Doing so adjusts her druid level down by 9 for purposes of determining the companion's characteristics and special abilities.

A druid of 16th level or higher can select a mastyrial. Doing so adjusts her druid level down by 15 for purposes of determining the companion's characteristics and special abilities.

Animals not in the *Monster Manual* appear in *DUNGEON* #110.

Druids otherwise function as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

### FIGHTER

Most fighters in a DARK SUN game are either arena gladiators, soldiers serving in a dragon-king's army, guards of merchant caravans or a noble villa, or mercenaries.

Gladiators tend to focus on melee combat, because that's what the Athasian crowds like to watch. Most are slaves—the property of nobles or merchant houses—but a few have earned their freedom by fighting particularly well. Free gladiators support themselves with the prizes they earn in the arena or by training new gladiators.

For more information on the gladiator events in a typical Athasian arena, see the *Complete Warrior* or *DRAGON* #303.

The bulk of a city-state's army consists of conscripted slaves with only rudimentary martial training, but each dragon-king also keeps several legions of elite soldiers that constantly drill, parade, and patrol. Among the most famous—or notorious—are Urik's Obsidian Guard and the all-female Shadow Consorts of Nibenay. Most military units are commanded by a high-ranking templar in the service of the ruling dragon-king, but particularly prestigious units receive orders directly from the dragon-king they serve.

The merchant houses of Athas likewise have highly organized caravan guards that function like military units in their own right. Most merchant houses have mounted cavalry guards that patrol ahead of caravans and keep the trade routes clear. They also employ foot soldiers that march along with the caravan, keeping it safe from bandits and the many monsters of Athas.

Nobles also employ a number of fighters as bodyguards and personal retinues to safeguard their holdings. Most fighters regard employment by a noble as easy work, because most nobles are content to have their personal guards stand watch in the villa and occasionally parade through town. Only when a noble is involved in some intrigue, the slaves rise up, or a monster attacks will such a fighter see action.

Within the last century, some enterprising freemen and smaller merchant houses have formed small mercenary companies that offer the services of experienced fighters to nobles, merchant houses, and (in times of war) even the dragon-kings themselves. Individual soldiers of fortune have always existed, but organized units-for-hire are a relatively recent development. Most mercenary companies use armed camps in the desert wastelands as their headquarters, with small business offices in the nearest city-state where they make deals and recruit new troops. Among the mercenary companies, the Black Reavers northwest of Urik and the all-Maenad Vareshi Brigade (hidden within the walls of Balic) are the most famous.

Fighters function as described in the *Player's Handbook.*

## MONK

Large monasteries for training monks don't exist in DARK SUN, and so the monks of Athas learn their techniques directly from lone, more experienced monks.

Popular in the gladiatorial arenas for their skill fighting without weapons or armor, many monks make their living as relatively pampered slaves of powerful nobles and templars. A monk is seen as a less dangerous slave than a psychic warrior, yet one almost equally capable of providing unusual and crowd pleasing martial displays. Athasian monks have no problem using their myriad special abilities to impress a crowd. After all, a popular (and profitable) gladiator slave is a safe, well-cared-for one.

Due to their popularity, monk gladiators are frequently freed in their later years, and most of them train other freemen in their ways. These free monks often follow their teachers into the arenas in search of wealth and further training. Others use their skills to survive the harsh world outside the cities, finding their abilities and discipline boons in the chaotic and unpredictable sands of Athas.

Monks function as described in the *Player's Handbook.*

## PALADIN

Like the monk, a paladin relies on her discipline to make sense of a chaotic world. While others might panic when faced by some new and unexpected threat bursting from the sands, the paladin quickly assesses the situation and forms a plan of action.

Athasian paladins don't worship any particular god, but they have a strong and unbending belief in the supremacy of law and goodness.

Paladins are extremely rare in Athas for several reasons. The harsh nature of the desert world puts a high premium on flexibility and adaptability, neither of which the paladin is particularly known for. In addition, dragon-kings take umbrage at a paladin's unerring goodness and continuous striving for the freedom of city-states from the tyranny of dragon-kings. Finally, most paladins are loners, as many beings in Athas can't reconcile the needs of survival with the paladin's stubborn adherence to a strict code of morality.

**Special mount:** The paladin's special mount is typically a kank (for a Medium paladin) or a baazrag (for a Small paladin). See *DUNGEON* #110 for a description of these creatures.

Paladins otherwise function as described in the *Player's Handbook.*

## PSION

Psionics are commonplace in the DARK SUN setting—more so than traditional magic.

Because many residents of the city-states have a little psionic power themselves, psionics are part of everyday life. A resident of Tyr expects a master blacksmith to use *psionic fabricate* in addition to the mundane skills of the smith. Many nobles employ egoist healers to keep themselves healthy and telepaths to keep their slaves in line. Each city-state has one or more colleges and academies devoted to the pursuit of psionic knowledge, and a

### FAMILIARS ON ATHAS

The following creatures are available as familiars in a DARK SUN campaign. Each creature is described in detail in *DUNGEON* #110.

| Familiar | Special |
|---|---|
| • Critic lizard | Master gains a +2 bonus on Reflex saves |
| • Floater | Master gains a +3 bonus on Sense Motive checks |
| • Hurrum, speckled | Master gains a +3 bonus on Diplomacy checks |
| • Jankx | Master gains a +3 bonus on Listen checks |
| • Kes'trekel | Master gains a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves |
| • Mulworm | Master gains +3 hit points |
| • Ramphor | Master gains a +3 bonus on Spot checks |
| • Snake, Tiny viper | Master gains a +3 bonus on Bluff checks |
| • Z'tal | Master gains a +3 bonus on Intimidate checks |

powerful psion can easily find work with a merchant house or noble family.

The templars that rule each city-state don't fully trust powerful psions, however, because they draw power from a source that the dragon-king can't control. Most mid- to high-level psions are watched closely for signs of disloyalty to the city-state. The dragon-kings—powerful psions themselves—are smart enough not to spurn psionic subordinates completely. Most dragon-kings have small cabals of well-trained psions that provide espionage and security.

Psions function as described in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook.*

## PSYCHIC WARRIOR

Psychic warriors often belong to one of several esoteric, quasi-religious orders. The dragon-kings tolerate and encourage some psychic orders, while they ruthlessly oppress others; it all depends on how willing the order is to kowtow to the dragon-king and his templars.

Atzetuk, dragon-king of Draj, and Lalali-Puy, dragon-queen of Gulg, have orders of high-level psychic warriors as their personal guards. Because those psychic warriors are ruthlessly indoctrinated to obey their masters without question, it's more likely that PC psychic warriors come from an independent order. The Order of the Feral Claw (in the Forest Ridge northwest of the Tablelands), the Pale Faction (with its secret monasteries in each of the seven city-states), and the Disciples of Szanae (headquartered in Cromlin) train many psychic warriors and grant their graduates a degree of autonomy. Other groups of psychic warriors form secret cabals devoted to specific martial arts and psionic fighting techniques. Whether they're open or secretive, independent or controlled by a dragon-king, groups of psychic warriors combine rigorous physical training with guided meditations that gradually unlock psionic potential.

Most psychic warriors retain the self-discipline they learned during their initial training and have lawful alignments, although this isn't a requirement. A few psychic warriors have spurned the monastic lifestyle completely and do battle in Athas's gladiator arenas.

Psychic warriors function as described in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook.*

## RANGER

Ranger PCs are somewhat more important in a DARK SUN game than in traditional D&D, because more of the action takes place outdoors rather than in a dungeon. The wilds of Athas are a treacherous place, where a party unskilled in survival won't last for more than a day or two.

Most ranger PCs learned their skills while traveling the wastes of Athas as guides, hunters, or scouts for a military organization. Many rangers enjoy good relations with druids, and some gain their first animal companion after a druid shows them how to call one to them. Unlike druids, however, rangers tend to prefer solitude or small, informal groups. The streets and buildings of an Athasian city seem as dangerous to a typical ranger as the wastes are to a typical citizen of a city-state.

Rangers function as described in the *Player's Handbook*, except that a ranger's choices for animal companions are different (see the Druid section), and the list of potential favored enemies includes different monsters in each category. In other words, some of the obvious choices for favored enemy in standard D&D (evil outsiders, dragons) might come up less in a DARK SUN game.

## ROGUE

DARK SUN rogues come from all walks of life: slave, freeman, merchant, and noble. The dominant settings for DARK SUN adventures are the wilderness and the city-states—both places that reward the skilled PC, and no PC has more skill points than a rogue.

Many caravan masters working for one of Athas's merchant houses are mid- to high-level rogues, and most senior members of the merchant class have at least some levels in the rogue class. Those who take valuable cargoes along the dangerous roads of Athas have to be shrewd bargainers, astute wilderness guides, and trained combatants.

Every city-state has one or more thieves' guilds, although they're circumspect enough to avoid the attention of the dragon-king. From their well-hidden lairs, the thieves' guilds often run the black market in everything from arcane spell components to illegal drugs and poisons. Many members are accomplished burglars and bandits, surrendering a percentage of their ill-gotten gains in exchange for the guild's protection and support. Thieves' guilds also fence stolen goods, often selling them to less scrupulous merchant houses whose caravans then spirit the loot out of the city-state.

Rogues function as described in the *Player's Handbook.*

## SORCERER

Rarest of the spellcasting classes, sorcerers combine the flexibility of psions with the potentially devastating power of the wizard. The ability to become a

sorcerer seems to occur randomly, and most of those who discover they have the gift do not reveal it to anyone.

Unlike wizards, who typically spend many years honing their craft, sorcerers generally gain their abilities suddenly, during adolescence. Without quite understanding the destructive power they wield, most youths who discover their latent sorcery find it exciting and cast the most powerful spells they can. They often learn the difference between preserving and defiling magic the hard way.

Because of the destruction wrought by defilers, and the difficulty in discovering who has the ability to cast sorcerous spells, every city-state has outlawed sorcery. Known and suspected sorcerers face execution. As a result, sorcerers have learned to hide their spellcasting, by masking their arcane gestures, whispering their verbal components, and hiding on their persons the strange materials and components they need to cast spells. Many attempt to pass themselves as psions, while bolder sorcerers carry a fake spellbook, knowing that the laws are slightly more lenient on wizards than on sorcerers.

Sorcerers function as described in the *Player's Handbook*, except as noted below.

**Skills:** Sleight of Hand is an additional class skill for sorcerers, who often use it to obscure their somatic gestures from the prying eyes of any nearby templars.

**Familiar:** Sorcerers can choose animals from the Familiars on Athas table for their familiars. They otherwise follow the rules set out on page 32 of the *Player's Handbook*.

### SOULKNIFE

Soulknives are rare on Athas. This poses no particular restriction for PCs, but among the general populace, there simply aren't many soulknives. Most denizens of Athas don't make the distinction between psychic warriors and soulknives, and indeed, few organizations devoted to training would-be soulknives exist.

The Whetstone Temple in Tyr trains soulknives, and claims to be able to teach the ability to manifest a mindblade to anyone willing to undergo their rigorous mental and physical training. Conversely, the Order of Maulirik in the city-state of Draj contends that only those of certain bloodlines are capable of becoming soulknives, and even then, the ability can lie latent for generations. They use a combination of clairsentient probing and genealogical research to identify those with the potential to become soulknives, then offer membership in the order for those who qualify. Groups of soulknives aren't as well-established as the psychic warrior orders, so most mid- to high-level soulknives are either actively leading such organizations or completely independent of them.

Some soulknives wind up using their martial prowess as gladiators, because the sparkle of their mindblades are sure crowd-pleasers. They also can't be disarmed for more than a few seconds, and a sundered mindblade can simply be reformed with a thought. Soulknife gladiators tend to be patient combatants who wear down their foes gradually.

Other soulknives favor more subtle work. Many high-ranking nobles have been slain by a soulknife who walked into a "safe" area and created a weapon out of thin air.

Soulknives function as described in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

### WILDER

Wilder PCs are generally mixed in with their psion brethren. The distinction between wilder and psion is lost on most residents of Athas. Accordingly, NPCs with a level or two of wilder are common in a DARK SUN game.

Among the city-states, the ability to use psionic powers like a wilder seems to emerge in outcasts of one kind or another—often after a physical or emotional trauma of some sort. Folk tales abound involving badly beaten slaves who become wilders and take vengeance on their cruel masters. Slave tribes wandering the desert sometimes find that the combination of heat stroke and starvation causes wilder abilities to emerge.

Finally, maenads seem to have a natural affinity for wilder-style psionics. Among maenads, it's the psions who are rare and the wilders who are relatively common.

Wilders function as described in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

### WIZARD

Arcane magic is against the law in most of the city-states of Athas, because the dragon-kings don't want further defiling (other than by themselves), and they're loath to support potential future rivals. In secret, however, wizards still study the arcane arts, gathering in secret cabals or reading ancient texts in solitude.

Except in the city-state of Tyr, using arcane magic is illegal, so by definition most wizards are criminals or rebels. Yet many of the other groups opposed to the rule of the dragon-kings and their templars, such as druids and elemental clerics, distrust wizards because any wizard is a potential defiler of Athas's remaining life energy. Wizards don't even necessarily trust other wizards, because every wizard is sorely tempted by the additional power that defiler magic offers.

Most PC wizards are revolutionaries, working secretly to overthrow the dragon-kings and create a more just society in their place. However, wizards face greater temptations than most characters, because every spell they cast is an opportunity to ravage the planet further in exchange for more power. Only those wizards who never succumb to the temptation have the right to call themselves preservers. All others are, to greater or lesser degrees, defilers.

Wizard PCs generally don't reveal their true nature to others. If you play a wizard, you'll want to think about a "cover story" to present to NPCs, and you'll want to consider whether and how you'll let your fellow PCs in on your secret. Many wizards pretend to be psions or elemental clerics.

The wizard class functions as described in the *Player's Handbook*, except as noted below.

**Skills:** Sleight of Hand is an additional class skill for wizards, who often use it to obscure their somatic gestures from the prying eyes of any nearby templars.

**Familiar:** Wizards can choose animals from the Familiars on Athas table for their familiars. They otherwise follow the rules set out on page 32 of the *Player's Handbook*.

# DARK SUN

## Defilers of Athas

**by David Noonan · Illustrated by Eric Polak · border by Chuck Lucaks**

Defiling magic formed a central trope in the *Dark Sun Campaign Setting*. The Dark Sun rules divided wizards into two classes: preserver wizards who carefully channel the world's life energy and defiler wizards who tap into the planet's energy without regard to the consequences. Indeed, overuse of defiling magic is the central reason why Dark Sun's world of Athas is a harsh, brutal desert rather than the lush land of wonder that it once was.

When a wizard uses defiling magic, he kills all plant life—from large trees to the miniscule nutrients in the soil—within a specified radius. All this plant matter is turned into a fine white ash, and it takes centuries for anything to grow there again. Accordingly, defilers are eager to hunt down the few remaining lush places on Athas, turning them into ash as they power their magic.

Previous incarnations of the Dark Sun setting used a variety of rules to model the drawing of power from the life energy of the land itself. Defilers and preservers were split into two separate classes, with complex rules for preservers becoming defilers and vice versa. Sometimes a caster chose whether to defile or not when she prepared her spells; sometimes she chose at the moment of casting. And using defiling magic gave you two main benefits: you needed fewer experience points to attain the next level, and you could sometimes get more—but not higher—spell slots per day. Conversely, a bad roll could leave you with fewer spell slots than a wizard of your level would otherwise have. Defiling magic was a concept rich with flavor, but Dark Sun's rules for it from previous editions don't translate well to the current D&D rules.

What follows is an interpretation of the defiler magic that remains true to the spirit of the concept: that defiling magic is a constant temptation to take "just a little" energy from the earth in exchange for power. If you're already playing a Dark Sun game, this new system might represent too radical a change for an ongoing game. But if you're eager to try something new, consider tempting arcane spellcasters with defiler magic that's available to them whenever they're willing to pay the cost.

### DEFILER MAGIC

When an arcane spellcaster casts a spell, she taps into the life energy of Athas. Most wizards and sorcerers train their apprentices to avoid taking too much energy—and thereby killing all plant life in the vicinity of the spellcaster—because the stolen energy doesn't return for years. Thus, the arcane magic defiles the land, leaving it a scarred, lifeless landscape.

Every spellcaster knows, however, that she's voluntarily limiting the power of her spells in this way. With any spell she casts, she can choose to cast off her self-imposed limits and defile the land around her in exchange for a rush

### THE CREATION OF DARK SUN

by Stan!

In late 1990 the TSR management was sure that Dragonlance had run its course (something they seemed to be convinced of every couple of years). Tim Brown and Troy Denning were given the assignment to create a new fantasy setting that could support both games and novels.

"We looked at what TSR already had," Brown recalls, "and realized that to a *great* extent, they were all very much in the vein of Tolkein. We decided that it was important for this new product to be completely different." To that end, they planned to make a setting with none of the usual trappings—no elves or dwarves, no orcs or even dragons. "We wanted to make something that owed more to Edgar Rice Burroughs's *John Carter* books than to *Conan* or *Lord of the Rings*. Eventually, though, we realized that if we went too far we'd lose the D&D audience."

The world of Dark Sun regained the standard D&D races, but each one was re-envisioned to a greater or lesser extent. "The biggest change was probably to the halflings," Brown says chuckling. "Man, did we do a number on them." Indeed, the savage, cannibalistic halflings are one of the first elements that people focus on when describing the setting. It also gained a few interesting races of its own, most notably the insectoid thri-kreen.

Another way in which Dark Sun broke from the mold is the role that art played in developing the world. "We included Brom from the very beginning," Brown recalls. "He wasn't there just to paint what we told him. We kept him involved in the development process. He would bring us sketches of ideas he had, and we'd design rules and story details to fit them. He's as much a creator of that world as the writers are." This might be standard practice for D&D products now, but it was revolutionary in 1991.

## DEFILER BENEFITS AND COSTS

| Effect | Defiler Points Earned |
|---|---|
| Make spell silent | 1 |
| Make spell still | 1 |
| Make spell heightened | 1 per level |
| Make spell empowered | 3 |
| Make spell extended | 2 |
| Make spell quickened | 4 |
| Make spell maximized | 4 |
| Recover expended spell | 2 per spell level |
| Recover expended spell slot | 3 per spell level |
| Cast a spell without paying XP cost | 1 per 250 XP |
| Cast a spell without expensive material component | 1 per 500 gp |

of arcane power. Doing so is an evil act, but many a good-hearted spellcaster has resorted to defiler magic in desperate straits or when facing a greater evil.

In game terms, this extra power from defilement takes the form of free metamagic effects applied to the spell at the moment you cast it. For example, you could defile the land in exchange for a maximized *fireball* or an extended *ethereal jaunt* spell. You simply announce your intention to defile when you cast the spell, and you gain the extra benefit without changing the spell slot you expend or requiring the feat. Unlike normal metamagic, defiling magic doesn't take any extra time, even if you cast arcane spells spontaneously.

Once you're done casting the spell, two other things happen: you earn one or more defiler points, and the land around you is defiled.

### DEFILER POINTS

Whenever you use defiler magic, you earn defiler points according to the Defiler Benefits and Costs table:

With each spell you apply a metamagic effect to, you can take a maximum number of defiler points equal to half your caster level. For example, a 6th-level wizard couldn't use defiling magic to cast a maximized *fireball* because that would earn 4 defiler points, but an 8th-level wizard could do so.

For the choices on the Defiler Benefits and Costs table that don't directly mimic metamagic effects, there's no inherent limit to how many defiler points you can gain with a single spell. The nonmetamagic effects function as follows:

**Recover Expended Spell:** Unlike the other uses of defiling magic, you aren't casting a spell at the moment. Instead, you spend a standard action to draw forth the life energy of Athas (which provokes an attack of opportunity if there's a foe nearby) and recall any one spell that you had prepared and then cast. The spell is then prepared again, just as if it had not been cast previously.

**Recover Expended Spell Slot:** As above, only it recovers the spell slot for spontaneous arcane casters. Because a spell slot is more versatile than a specific prepared spell, the defiler point cost is higher.

**Cast a Spell Without Paying XP Cost:** You can gain defiler points to substitute for XP used as a component in spells such as *permanency* and *limited wish*. You need not take enough defiler points to completely eliminate the XP cost entirely. If a spell has a 500 XP component, you could instead pay 250 XP and take 1 defiler point.

**Cast a Spell Without Expensive Material Component:** As above, but you're replacing diamond dust or a similarly costly item with the life energy of Athas. You can split the cost between defiler points and gp if you like.

### THE TAINT OF DEFILING

The defiler points you get from using defiler magic accumulate over time (as described below), and they also destroy the vegetation around the spellcaster. Once you have defiler points, you must deal with the taint of defiler magic by assuming the defilement into your body and increasing your defiler score or meditating to eliminate the defiler points.

**Important Note:** Defiler points and your defiler score aren't the same thing. Defiler points represent how much you've been pushing your life energy around lately. Defiler score is a historical record of how much you've scarred the planet. Defiler scores only come into play when a defiler assumes the taint of defiling (see Assume the Taint). Once a creature has a defiler score, it can never be removed.

#### Resist the Taint

Your assault on the planet's life energy is mirrored in your own body. Too much defiling can weaken your own life energy and willpower, and you might subconsciously feel alienated and withdrawn from others. Consult the Accumulated Defiler Points table. You suffer these penalties until you eliminate your defiler points through meditation or assuming the taint (see the Accumulated Defiler Points table). The penalties described in the Accumulated Defiler Points table are cumulative. For example, a defiler with 21 defiler points suffers a -4 penalty on all Wisdom- and Charisma-based skill checks, a -2 penalty to Constitution, and is fatigued if he engages in strenuous action for more than 1 minute.

#### Assume the Taint

You can voluntarily accept the taint of defilement. If you were fatigued due to your defiler points, you aren't anymore. Add half your defiler points (round up) to your permanent defiler score. Then wipe away all your defiler points. For example, if you have 11 defiler points and a defiler score of 3 when you assume the taint, your defiler score goes up to 9, you have no defiler points, and you lose the ability score and skill check penalties.

#### Eliminating Defiler Points

Meditating in undefiled areas of Athas is the only known way to eliminate defiler points. How fast the defiler points disappear depends on the terrain in which you're meditating. See the Meditating to Reduce Defiler Points sidebar.

If you have a druid assisting you in the meditation, you eliminate defiler points twice as fast. But remember: Druids don't like defilers, for obvious reasons.

### DEFILED LAND

From the mightiest tree to the tiniest lichen, every bit of nonsentient life in the immediate vicinity of the defiling spellcaster is utterly destroyed, turned to a fine ash. The land is sterile and won't sustain life for decades or centuries afterward.

The radius of this destructive effect depends on two factors: the amount of vegetation around and the number of defiler points earned when the spell was cast. See the Range of the Defilement sidebar.

If you cast a spell from within a recently defiled area (often because you defiled it the previous round), add the radius of the previous defilement to half the new radius to figure out how much land is defiled. Calculate the new radius as if the old vegetation were still there. "Half the radius" sounds like a smaller area, but it actually defiles more square footage on a per-spell basis than the original spell. Successive defilements from the same place deal disproportionate damage to Athas; you're effectively attacking an open wound.

For example, if you use defiling magic to cast a maximized *fireball* on a scrub plain, you defile everything within a 40-foot radius. If you use defiling magic again to cast a second maximized *fireball* from the same spot, you add half the usual radius (20 feet in this case) to the original radius (40 feet). Now everything within 60 feet of you is defiled. A third maximized *fireball* would extend the radius of defilement to 80 feet.

### COMBATING DEFILER MAGIC

Because they're the guardians of the land, druids often lead the fight against defilers. They've developed several spells to aid them in this fight. Two of the more common are described below.

### Detect Defiler

Divination
**Level:** Drd 1
**Components:** V, S
**Casting Time:** 1 standard action
**Range:** 60 ft.
**Area:** Cone-shaped emanation
**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 min./level (D)
**Saving Throw:** None
**Spell Resistance:** No

You can sense the presence of defilers nearby. The amount of information revealed depends on how long you study a particular area or subject.

*1st Round:* Presence or absence of creatures with a defiler score or defiler points.

*2nd Round:* Number of defilers (with either a defiler score, defiler points, or both) and the power of the most potent defiler present, according to the Detect Defiler table.

If the strongest defiler aura's power is overwhelming and the HD or level of the aura's source is at least twice your character level, you are stunned for 1 round and the spell ends.

*3rd Round:* The power and location of each aura. If an aura is outside your line of sight, then you discern its direction but not its exact location.

Each round, you can turn to detect defilers in a new area. The spell can penetrate barriers, but 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 3 feet of wood or dirt blocks the spell. Athas is a metal-poor place, so metal barriers are rare and lead sheets almost unheard of.

## FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

You can easily use the defiler magic system in a game that doesn't take place on DARK SUN's world of Athas—fantasy literature is full of examples of corrupt or defiling magic, after all. If you use these rules in a campaign world you've created yourself, you should make some adjustments, however. The world of DARK SUN is basically a desert world where lush, abundant, and fertile places are rare. Furthermore, defilers face opposition from all sides. Druids and other organizations that care about the planet's welfare hunt them down. The sorcerer-kings who rule Athas are defilers themselves, and they don't like competition for the world's life energy; they regard every independent defiler as a potential usurper and act accordingly.

As presented in this article, the defiler magic system assumes that vegetation is hard to come by and that defilers live hunted or secret lives. If you eliminate either of those factors, you make defiling magic more powerful, so you might want to add some more costs to the system. Feat prerequisites, prestige class membership, or more painful penalties for defiler points are all good places to start looking.

Even if you don't use defiler magic in your game, it's relatively easy to give the central idea behind the t'liz—draining people, then using the energy to make spells more powerful—to a vampire spellcaster. Such a villain might drain his own minions before or during a fight with the PCs to get free metamagic.

## ACCUMULATED DEFILER POINTS

| Defiler points | Effect |
|---|---|
| 1+ | You suffer a -2 penalty on all Wisdom- and Charisma-based skill checks. |
| 11+ | You suffer a -2 penalty to Constitution. If you engage in strenuous action (fighting, hustling, and so on) for more than 1 minute, you are fatigued. |
| 21+ | You suffer a -2 penalty on all Wisdom- and Charisma-based skill checks. |
| 31+ | You suffer a -2 penalty to Constitution. Your alignment changes to evil if it isn't already. |
| 41+ | You become a t'liz (described below) and fall under the DM's control. |

## MEDITATING TO REDUCE DEFILER POINTS

| Terrain Vegetation | Time Spent Meditating |
|---|---|
| Lush (forest, garden) | 2 hours per defiler point |
| Abundant (grassland, active farmland, mud flat) | 4 hours per defiler point |
| Fertile (oases, scrub plain, inactive farmland) | 8 hours per defiler point |
| Infertile (rocky badland, bare mountains) | 1 day per defiler point |
| Barren (boulder fields, sandy wastes, salt flats) | 1 week per defiler point |

### DETECT DEFILER

| Creature | Aura Power |
|---|---|
| Has defiler points | Faint |
| Defiler score of 1-10 | Moderate |
| Defiler score of 11-30 | Strong |
| Defiler score of 31+ | Overwhelming |

### RANGE OF DEFILEMENT

| Terrain Vegetation | Radius Defiled |
|---|---|
| Lush (forest, garden) | 1 ft. x number of defiler points |
| Abundant (grassland, active farmland, mud flat) | 5 ft. x number of defiler points |
| Fertile (oases, scrub plain, inactive farmland) | 10 ft. x number of defiler points |
| Infertile (rocky badland, bare mountains) | 20 ft x number of defiler points |
| Barren (boulder fields, sandy wastes, salt flats) | 30 ft. x number of defiler points |

### Revenge of the Land

Evocation [Earth]
**Level:** Drd 5
**Components:** V, S, M
**Casting Time:** 1 standard action
**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
**Targets:** One defiler creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart
**Duration:** 1 round/level
**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial (see text)
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

The life energy of the earth is channeled through your spell, affecting creatures within range that have a defiler score, then returning to the land. Translucent arcs of energy emerge from the ground near you and connect unerringly with each target before connecting back to the ground. The energy deals 1d8 points of damage per 2 caster levels each round. Targets need not be in contact with the ground to be affected by this spell.

Targets can attempt a Fortitude save to negate the damage for that round, but they must apply their defiler score as a penalty on the Fortitude save. As long as targets are within range, they attempt a new save and potentially take damage anew at the beginning of each of your turns, regardless of whether they succeeded or failed at the save in the previous round. If you don't penetrate a subject's spell resistance when you first cast *revenge of the land,* that subject is unaffected by the spell in subsequent rounds. Only by leaving the range of *revenge of the land* or waiting out the spell's duration can targets avoid attempting the save each round.

Creatures without a defiler score, including those who have defiler points but no defiler score, are unaffected.

*Material Component:* A live seed, which is thrown at the caster's feet and ground into the dirt.

### T'LIZ

Arcane spellcasters who perform a paroxysm of defiling magic sometimes become t'liz, undead defilers who walk the earth, feasting on the living energy of creatures rather than plants. Sometimes becoming a t'liz is accidental, but a defiler often seeks out undeath to prolong his life at the expense of the planet's health.

T'lizes are puppetmasters who prefer to work through minions as they seek magical knowledge and power from Athas's bygone ages of plenty. Most seek power for its own sake, reveling in their more powerful forms. But a few defilers became t'lizes by mistake and stop at nothing to recover a scrap of ancient lore that will restore them to life.

T'lizes appear much as they did in life, but their skin is unnaturally pale and their weight gradually diminishes until they take on a gaunt appearance. Their skin dries up, and many t'lizes anoint themselves in expensive oils to give themselves the illusion of healthy life. Like vampires, they cast no shadows.

### Sample T'Liz

*The smell of spiced oils fill the room as this pale, gaunt man points toward you with a quivering hand, muttering words in a long-dead language as he does so.*

This example uses a human 8th-level wizard/6th-level loremaster as the character.

**T'Liz, 8th-Level Wizard/6th-Level Loremaster**
Medium Humanoid (Augmented Humanoid)
**Hit Dice:** 14d12 (91 hp)
**Initiative:** -1
**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)
**Armor Class:** 19 (-1 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, +4 armor), touch 0, flat-footed 18
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +7/+4
**Attack:** Touch +4 melee touch (energy drain)
**Full Attack:** Touch +4 melee touch (energy drain)
**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks:** Energy drain, fear aura, rebuke undead, spawn
**Special Qualities:** Applicable knowledge, damage reduction 10/bludgeoning and magic, dodge trick, immunities, greater lore, lore, the lore of true stamina, turn resistance +4, undead traits
**Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +17
**Abilities:** Str 5, Dex 8, Con –, Int 21, Wis 15, Cha 13
**Skills:** Craft (alchemy) +12, Concentration +17, Gather Information +10, Hide +2, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (history) +24, Listen +18, Move Silently +12, Search +6, Spellcraft +14, Spot +4
**Feats:** Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Knowledge [history]), Spell Mastery (*bull's strength, cat's grace, bear's endurance, stoneskin*), Spell Penetration, Spell Focus (necromancy).
**Environment:** Warm desert
**Organization:** Solitary or troupe (1 t'liz plus 2d4 spectres)
**Challenge Rating:** 16
**Treasure:** Standard coins; standard goods; double items
**Alignment:** Neutral evil
**Advancement:** By character class
**Level Adjustment:** +4

### Combat

A t'liz will use energy drain (preferably before the fight begins) to amass the negative levels required to use metamagic on his spells. Then he destroys his foes with a prodigious display of arcane might.

The Will save against this t'liz's fear aura and the Fortitude save to prevent the negative levels bestowed by the t'liz have a DC of 18.

*Spells Prepared* (4/6/5/5/5/4/3/2; save DC 15 + spell level, 16 + spell level for Necromancy): 0—*detect magic* x2, *mage hand* x2; 1st—*magic missile* x3, *obscuring mist, ray of enfeeblement, shield* x2; 2nd—*bull's strength, cat's grace, see invisibility, spectral hand* x2; 3rd—*dispel magic, displacement, fly, lightning bolt, vampiric touch;* 4th—*arcane eye, bestow curse, enervation* x2, *stoneskin;* 5th—*dismissal, magic jar, teleport, waves of fatigue;* 6th—*disintegrate, finger of death, greater scrying;* 7th—*horrid wilting, trap the soul.*

*Possessions: Bracers of armor +4, cloak of resistance +4, staff of fire, +1 dagger.*

### Creating a T'liz

"T'liz" is an acquired template that must be applied to any humanoid creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature) with 41 or more defiler points.

A t'liz has all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Size and Type:** The creature's type changes to undead. Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. Size is unchanged.

**Hit Dice:** Increase all current and future Hit Dice to d12s.

**Armor Class:** A t'liz has a +5 natural armor bonus or the base creature's natural armor bonus, whichever is better.

**Attack:** A t'liz retains all the attacks of the base creature and also gains a touch attack if it didn't already have one. If the base creature can use weapons, the t'liz retains this ability. A creature with natural weapons retains those natural weapons. A t'liz fighting without weapons uses either its touch attack or its primary natural weapon (if it has any). A t'liz armed with a weapon uses its touch or a weapon, as it desires.

**Full Attack:** A t'liz fighting without weapons uses either its touch attack (see above) or its natural weapons (if it has any). If armed with a weapon, it usually uses the weapon as its primary attack along with a touch or other natural weapons as natural secondary attacks.

**Special Attacks:** A t'liz retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains those described below. Save DCs are equal to 10 + 1/2 t'liz's HD + t'liz's Cha modifier unless otherwise noted.

*Fear Aura (Su):* T'lizes are surrounded by an aura of death, defilement, and evil. Creatures of less than 5 HD in a 60-foot radius that look at the t'liz must succeed on a Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell from a sorcerer of the t'liz's level. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same t'liz's aura for 24 hours.

*Energy Drain (Su):* Living creatures hit by a t'liz's touch attack (or any other natural weapon the t'liz might possess) gain two negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, the t'liz gains 5 temporary hit points and one point that functions like a defiler point (see below). Temporary hit points gained from this ability expire at a rate of 1 hit point per hour. A t'liz can use its energy drain ability once per round.

*Spells:* A t'liz can cast any spells it could cast while alive. They retain the defiler score they had in life, but they have no defiler points and cannot earn any. Instead, they can use defiling magic by substituting the negative levels they've bestowed within the last week on a one-for-one basis. Simply keep a tally of how many negative levels a t'liz bestows; that tally represents points the t'liz can spend for free metamagic and the other benefits of defiling magic.

For example, a t'liz that has bestowed six negative levels within the last week could spend four of those negative levels to maximize a fireball and have two negative levels' worth of defilement remaining.

The energy goes into the spell, so the creature that received the negative level doesn't get the energy back. The t'liz loses 5 temporary hit points for each negative level he expends in this way. Whenever the t'liz uses negative levels to power defiling magic, the surrounding vegetation is turned to ash just as if the t'liz were using defiling magic in the normal way.

*Rebuke Undead (Su):* T'lizes have a natural ability to channel negative energy so that undead do their bidding—or at least leave the t'liz alone. A t'liz can rebuke and command undead as a cleric of its Hit Dice.

*Spawn (Su):* A humanoid slain by a t'liz's energy drain rises as a spectre (described in the *Monster Manual*) 1d4 days after death.

**Special Qualities:** A t'liz retains all the base creature's special qualities and gains those described below.

*Turn Resistance (Ex):* A t'liz has +4 turn resistance.

*Damage Reduction (Su):* A t'liz's has damage reduction 10/bludgeoning and magic. Its natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reductions.

*Immunities (Ex):* T'lizes have immunities to electricity, polymorph (although they can use polymorph effects on themselves), and mind-affecting attacks.

**Abilities:** Increase from the base creature as follows: Int +4, Cha +4. Being an undead, a t'liz has no Constitution score.

**Skills:** T'lizes have a +8 racial bonus on Intimidate, Listen, and Move Silently checks. Otherwise same as the base creature.

**Organization:** Solitary or troupe (1 t'liz plus 2d4 spectres)

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +2.

**Treasure:** Standard coins; standard goods; double items.

**Alignment:** Any evil.

**Advancement:** By character class.

**Level Adjustment:** Same as the base creature +4.

# DARK SUN
# EQUIPMENT & RULES
## Tempered by a Burning World

by David Noonan · illustrated by Eric Polack, Todd Harris, and Jason Engle

The world of DARK SUN is extremely metal-poor, with only a few bronze and iron mines turning out ore in any quantities. Thus, many items that would otherwise be made from metal are fashioned from stone, bone, or ceramics instead. It's common to see a short sword made from the tooth of a spinewyrm, or an axe of glossy obsidian.

The shortage of metal affects character equipment in three important ways: Athasian currency is based on ceramic coins, the cost of gear varies depending on what it's made of, and more exotic metals are simply unavailable.

### CURRENCY

Gold is too scarce to make good currency (most of it is used in expensive jewelry), and silver is only slightly more common. For millennia, templar-controlled kilns in each of the city-states have manufactured ceramic coins with the visage of a dragon-king on one side and a cluster of notches on the other. The ceramic piece (cp) is the basic unit of currency across the Tablelands. The notches on the "tails" side radiate from a center point so you can break a ceramic piece into ten pie-shaped "bits." Ten bits equal one ceramic piece. An Athasian ceramic piece has the same purchasing power as a D&D gold piece, while a bit has the same purchasing power as a standard D&D silver piece. In most cases, you can simply translate the gp cost into a cp cost, but weapons and armor have special rules.

The merchant houses mint metal coins, which are stamped with the symbol of the house on one side and the year they were made on the reverse. A silver "house coin" is worth 10 ceramic pieces, and a gold "house coin" is worth 100 ceramic pieces. It's uncommon to see house coins in general circulation; the houses mostly use them in large transactions with each other and with the city-state governments.

### WEAPONS

The harsh DARK SUN setting lacks the expert metallurgy of normal D&D worlds, due in no small part to its lack of large metal deposits. Athas is not devoid of weaponry, however, as protection is needed from the terrible monsters that lurk just outside (or within) the gates of the city-states. Those who live on Athas have adapted to their environment by crafting weapons from whatever material they have at hand, whether bone and wood or low-quality bronze and iron.

#### Weapon Materials

The ability to make steel is largely unknown on Athas, and even the iron implements crafted by smiths often have flaws invisible to the eye. Metals such as mithral, adamantine, and platinum simply don't exist, or they've never been discovered. The following describes how the materials most DARK SUN weapons are made from affect their use.

**Bone:** Most weapons in DARK SUN are made of bone or stone. Weapons made of bone have a -2 penalty on attacks and damage (with a minimum damage of 1). Bone has a hardness of 6 and 10 hit points per inch of thickness. Bone weapons weigh half as much as their listed weight in the *Player's Handbook*.

A bone weapon has the same price in ceramic pieces as its gold-piece price in the *Player's Handbook*. The New DARK SUN Weapons table lists prices presuming the weapons are made of stone, bone, or wood.

**Blood Obsidian:** When volcanoes are created through defiler magic, veins of blood obsidian result. Weapons made from blood obsidian have a natural enhancement bonus of +1 on damage. This bonus does not stack with any other enhancement bonus. Thus, a blood obsidian scimitar with a +4 magic enhancement bonus effectively has a +4 enhancement bonus on both attacks and damage. In an area where magic does not function, it retains its natural +1 enhancement bonus on damage. A masterwork blood obsidian scimitar would have a +1 bonus on both attacks and damage. Blood obsidian has a hardness of 12 and 30 hit points per inch of thickness.

Weapons made from blood obsidian cost 2,000 more (in ceramic pieces) than the gold-piece price listed in the *Player's Handbook*.

**Bronze:** Weapons of bronze, while clearly inferior to iron items, are not nearly as bad as stone or bone weapons. Their attack and damage penalty is only -1. Bronze has a hardness of 9 and 20 hit points per inch of thickness.

Weapons forged of bronze cost 5 times (in ceramic pieces) the gold-piece value listed in the *Player's Handbook*.

**Iron:** Iron works as described in the *Player's Handbook*. It has a hardness of 10 and 30 hit points per inch of thickness. Iron weapons are not cold iron weapons and do not overcome damage reduction. Cold iron weapons cost twice as much as their normal iron counterparts and function as described in the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*.

Weapons forged of iron cost 10 times (in ceramic pieces) the gold piece value listed in the *Player's Handbook*.

**Stone:** Weapons made of stone have a -2 penalty on attacks and damage (with a minimum damage of 1). Stone has a hardness of 8 and 15 hit points per inch of thickness. Stone sling bullets have no penalty on attacks or damage.

A stone weapon has the same price in ceramic pieces as its gold-piece price in the *Player's Handbook*. The New DARK SUN Weapons table lists prices presuming the weapons are made of stone, bone, or wood.

**Wood:** Only certain weapons can effectively be made of wood. The club, quarterstaff, sap, great club, and all bows and crossbows can be made from wood without suffering a penalty. Any bludgeoning weapon can also be constructed from wood, but those not noted above suffer a -3 penalty on attacks and damage (with a minimum damage of 1). Weapons that deal piercing or slashing damage cannot be made of wood. Wood has a hardness of 5 and 10 hit points per inch.

A wooden weapon has the same price in ceramic pieces as its gold-piece price in the *Player's Handbook*.

### New Weapons in Dark Sun

The following new weapons are unique to DARK SUN. The New DARK SUN Weapons table lists damage, range, weight, and cost information for these weapons. Other data can be found in the explanatory text below.

**Cahulaks:** This weapon consists of a pair of four-bladed heads tied to either end of a 12-foot rope. Despite the cahulak's 10 foot reach it can be used to attack an adjacent foe.

Because the rope can wrap around an enemy's leg or other limb, you can make trip attacks with it. If you're tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the cahulak to avoid being tripped.

When using a cahulak, you get a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an opponent (including the roll to avoid being disarmed if such an attack fails).

The Weapon Finesse feat does not apply to the cahulak.

**Chatkcha:** This exotic ranged weapon is a crystalline throwing wedge. This weapon is as it appears in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

**Gythka:** This two-handed exotic melee weapon is a polearm with a blade at each end. You can fight with it

## DARK SUN WEAPON HIT POINTS

| | Wood<br>(Hardness 5) | Bone<br>(Hardness 6) | Stone<br>(Hardness 8) | Bronze<br>(Hardness 9) | Iron<br>(Hardness 10) | Blood Obsidian<br>(Hardness 12) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Light blade | – | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| One-handed blade | – | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Two-handed blade | – | 3 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 10 |
| Light hafted weapon | 2 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 10 |
| One-handed hafted weapon | 5 | 6 | 10 | 14 | 20 | 20 |
| Two-handed hafted weapon | 10 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 30 | 30 |
| Projectile weapon | 5 | 6 | – | 14 | 20 | – |

## NEW DARK SUN WEAPONS

| Exotic Weapons | Dmg (S) | Dmg (M) | Dmg (L) | Crit. | Range | Cost* | Weight | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Two-Handed Melee Weapons* | | | | | | | | |
| Cahulaks** | 1d6 | 2d4 | 2d6 | x2 | – | 25 cp | 1 lb. | Piercing |
| Gythka‡ | 1d8/1d8 | 1d10/1d10 | 2d8/2d8 | x2 | – | 60 cp | 25 lb. | Slashing |
| *Ranged Weapon* | | | | | | | | |
| Chatkcha | 1d4 | 1d6 | 1d8 | 18-20/x2 | 20 ft. | 1 cp | 1 lb. | Slashing |

*The listed cost is for bone, stone, or wood weapons. Weapons of other materials cost more. See the Weapon Materials section.

**Reach weapon.

‡Double weapon.

### DONNING ARMOR

| Armor Type | Don | Don Hastily | Remove* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bone, cord, wood, leather scale | 1 minute | 5 rounds | 1 minute |
| Bark, chitin, shell | 4 minutes | 1 minute | 1 minute |

*If you have some help, cut this time in half. A single character doing nothing else can help one or two adjacent characters. Two characters can't help each other don armor at the same time.

as if fighting with two weapons, but if you do, you incur all the normal attack penalties associated with fighting with two weapons, just as if you were using a one-handed weapon and a light weapon. A thri-kreen can wield two gythkas at once as double weapons due to its four arms, but takes penalties as if its off-hand weapon was a one-handed weapon, not a light weapon. This weapon is as it appears in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

### Dark Sun Names for Weapons

As archetypical to the DARK SUN setting as merciless gladiators and thri-kreen raiders are the savage weapons they invariably wield. Whether created by insectile hands, chipped from stone, or improvised from the sun-bleached bones of a desert monstrosity, the primitive weapons of Athas are just as deadly as those of any other world. Those familiar with the DARK SUN setting will remember weapons like the alhulak, chatkcha, and trikal. While some of these weapons have unique statistics and abilities all their own, others duplicate the statistics of better known D&D weapons and differ only in their description. Here is a list of some well-known DARK SUN arms and the weapons in the *Player's Handbook* that they equate to.

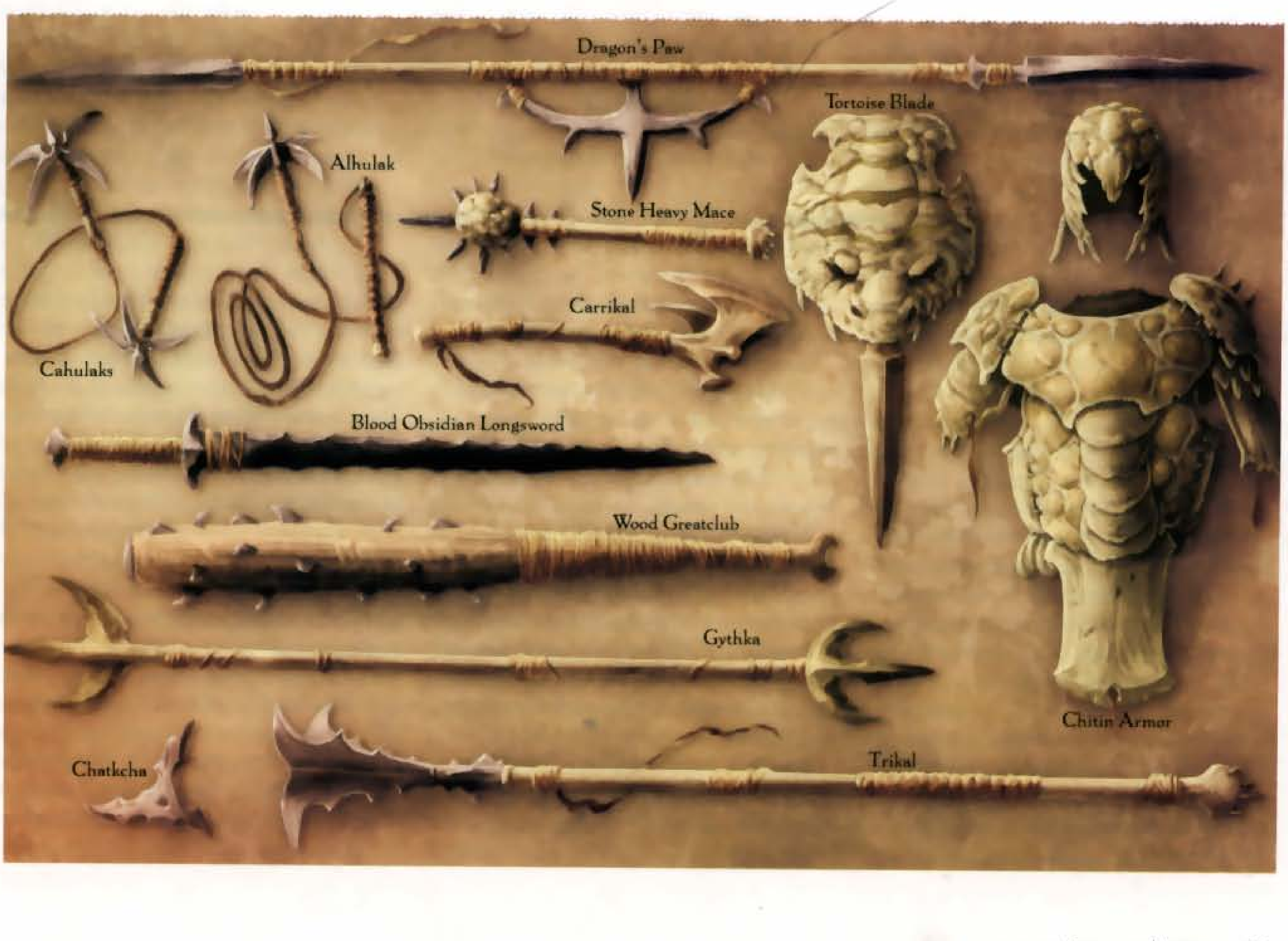
**Alhulak:** A 5-foot rope with a four-bladed grappling hook on the end. This weapon is effectively a heavy flail.

**Carrikal:** An axe made from the jaw of a mekillot, this weapon functions as a battleaxe.

**Dragon's Paw:** This weapon is a foot-long blade on either end of a quarterstaff. A curved blade is mounted in the middle of the staff, with gaps to put your hands through. It equates to an orc double axe.

**Puchik:** A dagger with hand guards and a grip perpendicular to the blade, it functions as a punching dagger.

**Tortoise Blade:** A small shield with a foot-long blade extending from an edge. This weapon is treated as a small shield with a shield spike that deals slashing damage.



## DARK SUN ARMOR AND SHIELDS

| Armor | Cost | Armor Bonus | Max Dex Bonus | Armor Check Penalty | Arcane Spell Failure | Speed (30 ft.) | (20 ft.) | Weight‡ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Light armor* | | | | | | | | |
| Padded | 5 cp | +1 | +8 | 0 | 5% | 30 ft. | 20 ft. | 10 lb. |
| Bark | 5 cp | +2 | +5 | -2 | 15% | 30 ft. | 20 ft. | 15 lb. |
| Cord | 15 cp | +2 | +5 | -1 | 5% | 30 ft. | 20 ft. | 15 lb. |
| Leather | 10 cp | +2 | +6 | 0 | 10% | 30 ft. | 20 ft. | 15 lb. |
| Bone | 20 cp | +3 | +4 | -3 | 15% | 30 ft. | 20 ft. | 20 lb. |
| Wood | 15 cp | +3 | +4 | -3 | 15% | 30 ft. | 20 ft. | 15 lb. |
| Studded leather | 125 cp | +3 | +5 | -1 | 15% | 30 ft. | 20 ft. | 20 lb. |
| Leather scale | 35 cp | +3 | +6 | -2 | 15% | 30 ft. | 20 ft. | 20 lb. |
| *Medium armor* | | | | | | | | |
| Shell | 25 cp | +3 | +3 | -2 | 20% | 20 ft. | 15 ft. | 20 lb. |
| Hide | 15 cp | +3 | +4 | -3 | 20% | 20 ft. | 15 ft. | 25 lb. |
| Bronze breastplate | 200 cp | +4 | +4 | -4 | 25% | 20 ft. | 15 ft. | 30 lb. |
| *Heavy armor* | | | | | | | | |
| Chitin | 100 cp | +5 | +0 | -6 | 35% | 20 ft.* | 15 ft.* | 35 lb. |
| Bronze half-plate | 600 cp | +6 | +1 | -7 | 40% | 20 ft.* | 15 ft.* | 50 lb. |
| *Shields* | | | | | | | | |
| Buckler | 15 cp | +1 | — | -1 | 5% | — | — | 5 lb. |
| Buckler, beetle | 6,600 cp | +2 | — | -1 | 5% | — | — | 5 lb. |
| Shield, light, wooden | 3 cp | +1 | — | -1 | 5% | — | — | 5 lb. |
| Shield, light, bronze | 9 cp | +1 | — | -1 | 5% | — | — | 6 lb. |
| Shield, heavy, wooden | 7 cp | +2 | — | -2 | 15% | — | — | 10 lb. |
| Shield, heavy, bronze | 20 cp | +2 | — | -2 | 15% | — | — | 15 lb. |
| Shield, tower** | 30 cp | +4 | — | -10 | 50% | — | — | 45 lb. |

*When running in heavy armor, you move only triple you speed, not quadruple.

**The tower shield can instead grant you cover. See the description.

‡Armor fitted for Small characters weighs half as much.

**Trikal:** This polearm has three blades on top and spikes below that. This weapon is effectively a halberd.

## ARMOR

The DARK SUN Armor and Shields table shows what armor is generally available on Athas. It includes several armor types described in the *Arms & Equipment Guide.* Any armor not listed on the table is rare and must be made of iron. Iron armor costs 5 times (in ceramic pieces) the gold piece value listed in the *Player's Handbook* and weighs half again (+50%) as much.

**Bark:** Carefully crafted from the thick bark of trees, bark armor is treated to prevent it from becoming brittle over time. Large plates of bark cover the torso and back, while strips of it are fastened to cloth or leather backing to cover the arms and legs.

**Bone:** Made from the bones of animals or slaughtered foes, bone armor consists of a leather or cloth coat reinforced with strips of bone. It only covers the torso, allowing the limbs freedom to move.

**Bronze Breastplate:** This is essentially the same as the steel breastplate presented in the *Player's Handbook,* except that it is made of bronze.

**Bronze Half-Plate:** The rarest noniron armor on Athas, bronze half-plate only differs from the the *Player's Handbook*'s half-plate in its weaker material.

**Buckler:** Bucklers are usually made from the scapula of an animal and reinforced with leather straps.

**Buckler, Beetle:** This buckler is actually a Tiny scarab beetle that latches onto the forearm. It takes a day of wearing the beetle for it to attune to a new owner before it grants an Armor Class bonus. After this day has ended, the beetle buckler acts as a masterwork buckler with a nonmagical +1 enhancement bonus to Armor Class.

A command word causes the beetle to fly around its owner, blocking ranged attacks (as the Deflect Arrows feat, but using the beetle's Reflex save bonus instead of its owner's). The beetle only attacks to defend itself.

*Beetle Buckler:* CR 1/2; Tiny vermin; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +6; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 24 (touch 18, flat-footed 18); Base Atk +0; Grp -9; Atk/Full Atk -1 melee (1d3-5/20, bite); Face/Reach 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.; SQ Deflect arrows, vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 1, Dex 23, Con 10, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2.

*Skills:* Hide +14, Listen +4, Move Silently +10, Spot +4.

*Deflect Arrows (Ex):* When detached from its shield position, a beetle buckler darts about in its owner's space, blocking one ranged attack per round as the Deflect Arrows feat.

*Vermin Traits:* Immune to all mind-influencing effects; darkvision 60 ft.

**Chitin:** Many of the creatures on Athas have tough exoskeletons made of thick chitin. As these plentiful creatures are often a source of food, it didn't take long for the people of the Tablelands to make their exoskeletons into wearable armor. Chitin armor is comprised of chitin plates covering the wearer's torso, as well as smaller pieces on the joints and limbs.

**Cord:** Made from knotted rope, cord armor is most common among halflings and tribes that live away from the city-states.

**Hide:** Cured and uncured animal skins, layered thickest over the chest and back, form this armor.

**Leather:** Hardened leather plates form the chest and back pieces, and are used to cover other vital areas such as joints. These hardened leather plates are held together with thinner pieces of leather to allow some freedom of movement.

**Leather Scale:** Made of cured leather scales, leather scale armor is identical to regular steel scale mail except in its material.

**Padded:** This armor is made by layering oiled canvas between silk, with a cotton or wool layer underneath. Popular among nobles, wealthy merchants, and others who wish to protect themselves without drawing attention, the outer layer of silk can be decorated as elaborately as normal clothes.

**Shell:** Made from the treated shells of tortoises and more exotic creatures, the alchemical process used to create shell armor makes it less brittle, so when struck it gives instead of shattering. Large shells form chest and back plates, with smaller shells covering joints and other vital areas.

**Shields:** Shields are large pieces of wood or metal that strap to the arm. They have wood grips that must be held, but the grips of small shields are such that the wielder can hold other items. A weapon cannot be wielded with the hand gripping the shield.

**Studded Leather:** Athasian studded leather is the same as presented in the *Player's Handbook,* except that it uses bone or stone studs instead of metal.

**Wood:** Like bone armor, wood armor is made of cloth or leather strips with wood strips sewn in.

## DARK SUN RULES

The following rules supplement those in the core rulebooks and reflect the character of the DARK SUN setting.

### Caste

For centuries, the city-states of Athas have been caste-based societies. Each caste has specific legal rights, but the castes aren't as vertically hierarchical as many real-world societies are. For example, the nobles aren't necessarily in a better or higher caste than the merchants—they're just in a different caste. Obviously, the lot of a slave is worse than everybody else, and the dragon-kings sit atop it all. In between those extremes are a number of more-or-less "equal" castes.

When you make a new character, consider carefully in which caste you'd like to start. It's mostly a roleplaying choice. You might occasionally face caste-related difficulties, but your choice of caste is spice for your character, not the main dish.

#### Slaves

Almost all manual labor and a fair degree of skilled labor and services are performed by slaves. All of the other castes can—and do—own slaves. Slaves are generally treated poorly, but they get water and regular meals because their masters have an incentive to keep them alive. Slaves have no rights, but they have the same legal protections that any other property does. A few slaves, such as temple scribes and gladiatorial champions, have lives that most residents of Athas would consider pampered. Some slaves are born to slave parents, while others began life in another caste but became slaves due to debts or as legal punishment. The laborers building the new pyramid to the dragon-king and the servant who brings you cool water in the merchant palace are probably slaves.

#### Freemen

A relatively small class, freemen are mostly individual artisans who were born to freemen. Some few are former slaves who won their freedom or escaped slaves who've successfully left their old identities behind. Life is a struggle to earn money for enough water, food, and shelter to stay alive. The bartender in the public house and the fruit-cart vendor in the market square are probably freemen.

#### Merchants

Not everyone who buys and sells goods is a merchant in the caste sense of the word. Powerful merchant families form their own caste, and they are technically citizens of their merchant house, not citizens of the city in which they reside. Because the merchant houses often retaliate en masse against overzealous templars who hassle their merchants, members of the caste have a degree of immunity from the petty injustices of the templars. However, the merchant houses have hierarchies and intrigues of their own, and being a merchant means being at the beck and call of your extended family. Merchants are usually born into their caste, although particularly promising freemen or nobles can sometimes marry or earn their way into the caste. The caravan leader you meet on the road is a merchant, and so is the canny bargainer in the immense tent in the bazaar.

#### Nobles

The noble caste is made up of powerful landowners who run the farms that surround each city-state. Most nobles have homes on the land they own, but they spend most of their time in villas within the city walls. You have to be born or married into this caste, and nobles are generally loath to marry members of other castes. Nobles have a degree of protection from the excesses of the templars—only high-ranking templars dare arrest or challenge a noble. Younger nobles with

### COMMON ATHASIAN LANGUAGES

| Language | Typical User |
|---|---|
| Aarakocra | Aarakocras |
| Aquan | Creatures from the Plane of Water |
| Auran | Creatures from the Plane of Air |
| Dwarven | Dwarves, some muls |
| Elven | Elves, a few half-elves |
| Giant | Braxats, beast-head giants, tareks |
| Gith | Gith |
| Halfling | Halflings, residents of Forest Ridge |
| Ignan | Creatures from the Plane of Fire |
| Maenadi | Maenads |
| Pterran | Pterrans, nikaals, ssurrans |
| Terran | Creatures from the Plane of Earth |
| Thri-Kreen | Thri-kreen |

many siblings sometimes find their way into the military or the adventuring life because they have a degree of autonomy but not much in the way of responsibilities. The people with the good seats at the arena are nobles. So are the people in the palanquins that weave their way through the streets of the city.

#### Templars

In addition to being clerics, templars are also the bureaucrats who keep the city-states running. They're responsible for everything from clean drinking water in the wells to the city's defenses. Each city-state has its own hierarchy of templars. Most templars can make arrests on real or trumped-up charges; in the city-states, your access to real justice depends almost entirely on your relationship to the dragon-king and high-ranking templars. Templars choose capable children from the freemen and noble classes to take templar training. The city watchman who investigates a murder is probably a templar, and so is the cleric providing healing at the dragon-king's temple.

#### Outsiders

As a caste (not a creature type), outsiders are those from outside the society of the city-states: thri-kreen warriors, pterran traders from Lost Scale, and so on. They're technically freemen, but templars tend to hassle them more. Particularly exotic outsiders will attract a lot of attention from passersby.

### Skills

All the skills in the *Player's Handbook* and *Expanded Psionics Handbook* are available on Athas. Three have minor changes, as detailed below.

#### Sleight of Hand

As an additional use of the Sleight of Hand skill, spellcasters can make their verbal and somatic components less obtrusive, muttering magic words under their breath and making magic gestures within their sleeves. When you attempt to cast a spell unobtrusively, your Sleight of Hand check is opposed by the observer's Spot check. The observer's success doesn't prevent you from casting the spell, just from doing it unnoticed.

#### Speak Language

The Common Athasian Languages sidebar presents the languages spoken on Athas. These are the most common languages characters will speak and come into contact with. Other languages are less common and cost three skill points to learn. You can still pick them as a bonus language if you justify it in your character's background. They are listed on the Uncommon Athasian Languages sidebar.

**Dialects:** Each of the seven city-states has its own dialect of Trade Tongue that its residents use in everyday conversation. The dialects (Balician, Draji, Gulgan, Nibenese, Raamin, Tyric, and Uriki) are mutually intelligible, and a DC 10 Sense Motive check is sufficient to identify the speaker's city of origin after listening to her speak for 1 minute or more. Characters attempting to conceal their regional accent or adopt another accent use a Disguise check opposed by the listener's Sense Motive check.

#### Swim

Only clerics with the Water domain have Swim as a class skill. There isn't enough standing water on Athas for any other character to need to know how to swim.

### Magic and Psionics

The following changes apply to rules laid out in the *Player's Handbook* and the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

#### Magic and Psionics are Mostly Different

On the world of Athas, magic and psionics are different for some purposes, but equivalent for others. This reflects the unique nature of reality in the world of DARK SUN, and the fact that study of psionics and magic occur in parallel.

**Same:** Effects that dispel or negate magic and psionics function equally well against both, because they enforce the mundane reality of Athas. A *negate psionics* power will make a wizard's *mage armor* spell go away, and a cleric will be unable to cast spells within a *null psionics* field. Likewise, a *dispel magic* spell will end an *offensive prescience* power, and no psion could use *ego whip* from within an *antimagic field*. Similarly, spell resistance and power resistance work equally well against both spells and psionics.

**Different:** You can shut down magic and psionics with the same effect, but the two means of altering reality retain some important differences. *Detect magic* notes the presence of psionics, and the *detect psionics* power will spot a spell. However, such detection spells and powers only note the presence of a "foreign" aura, not its strength or school/discipline. For example, a *detect magic* spell will indicate that a psychic warrior has two auras on him, but it won't reveal that they're faint telepathy (*detect hostile intent*) and moderate psychokinesis (*inertial barrier*). The spellcaster knows only that there are two psionic auras on the psychic warrior. Likewise, a *detect psionics* spell cast on a crypt door will reveal only a magic aura, not that it's the moderate necromancy aura of an *enervation* trap.

### Arcane Magic

The principles of psionics and divine magic are well understood, but arcane magic on Athas has been driven underground for centuries by the machinations of the dragon-kings. Over the years, arcane spellcasters have learned to adapt by making their spells more difficult to analyze and their castings more unobtrusive.

Accordingly, many DCs to discern or analyze arcane magic are higher than in standard D&D. In the DARK SUN campaign, the Spellcraft DC to figure out an arcane aura's school of magic (with *detect magic* or *arcane sight*, for example) is 20 + spell level. The higher DC applies whether the observer is an arcane caster or not. The Spellcraft DC to identify a spell as it's cast is 20 + spell level if it's an arcane spell. Identifying an arcane spell that's already in place (or materials created or shaped by arcane magic) requires a Spellcraft check with a DC of 25 + spell level. Identifying an arcane spell targeted on you after you attempt a saving throw requires a Spellcraft check with a DC of 30 + spell level.

**Defiler Magic:** When an arcane spellcaster casts a spell, she taps into the life energy of Athas. Most spellcasters train their apprentices to avoid taking too much energy and thereby killing all plant life in the vicinity, because the stolen energy doesn't return for years. Thus, arcane magic can defile the land, leaving it a scarred, lifeless landscape.

Every arcane spellcaster knows, however, that she's voluntarily limiting the power of her spells in this way. With any spell she casts, she can choose to cast off her self-imposed limits and defile the land around her in exchange for a rush of arcane power. Good aligned PCs should avoid defiling the land, and PCs of all alignments should worry about antagonizing other PCs and NPCs—in particular the dragon-kings—by doing so. For defiling rules, see "DARK SUN: Defilers of Athas" in *DRAGON* #315.

### Spells and Powers

Some of the spells described in the *Player's Handbook* have been changed to reflect life on Athas.

The *summon monster* and *summon nature's ally* spells have different creatures available to them. Obviously, bears, wolves, and eagles don't exist in DARK SUN, so the real world animals have largely been replaced with Athasian ones. Summoning animals is strictly the province of druids, so they've been taken off the *summon monster* lists. Conversely, wizards and elemental clerics have a much closer connection to the Inner Planes than druids do, so druids get access to summoned elementals only at high levels. Creatures not found in the *Monster Manual* appear in *DUNGEON* #110.

*Summon Monster I:* Available creatures are earthdelver, firesnake, rainrunner, and windraptor.

*Summon Monster II:* Available creatures are cinderbrute, cloudscout, sandknight, and wavearcher.

*Summon Monster III:* Available creatures are crysmal; elemental, Small (any); and thoqqua.

*Summon Monster IV:* Available creatures are arrowhawk, juvenile; mephit (any); salamander, flamebrother; tojanida, juvenile; and xorn, minor.

*Summon Monster V:* Available creatures are arrowhawk, adult; elemental, Medium (any); and tojanida, adult.

*Summon Monster VI:* Available creatures are belker; elemental, Large (any); ravid; salamander, average; xill; and xorn, average.

*Summon Monster VII:* Available creatures are arrowhawk, elder; djinni (genie); elemental, Huge (any); invisible stalker; rast; and xorn, elder.

*Summon Monster VIII:* Available creatures are chaos beast; salamander, noble; and tojanida, elder.

*Summon Monster IX:* Available creatures are elemental, elder (any).

*Summon Nature's Ally I:* Available creatures are baazrag, kes'trekel, snake (Small viper), and yallix.

*Summon Nature's Ally II:* Available creatures are seskarran and snake (Medium viper).

*Summon Nature's Ally III:* Available creatures are jhakar, kank, snake (constrictor), and snake (Large viper).

*Summon Nature's Ally IV:* Available creatures are boneclaw baazrag, crodlu, fodorran, pterrax, razorwing, and snake (Huge viper).

*Summon Nature's Ally V:* Available creatures are inix and snake (giant constrictor).

*Summon Nature's Ally VI:* Available creatures are cilops; crodlu, heavy; and elemental, Large (any).

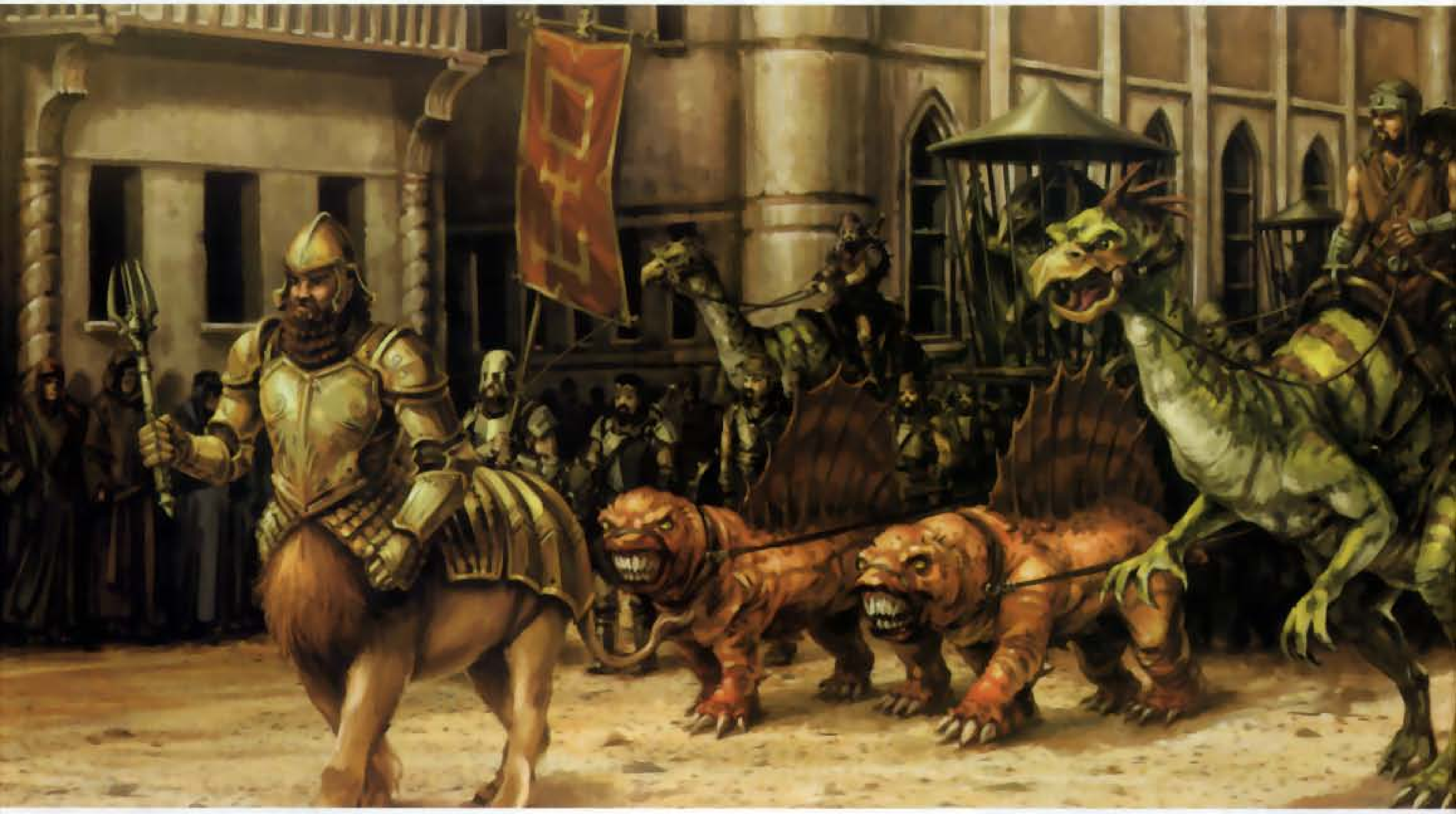
*Summon Nature's Ally VII:* Available creatures are elemental, Huge (any); mastyrial; and mekillot.

*Summon Nature's Ally VIII:* Available creatures are elemental, greater (any) and roc.

*Summon Nature's Ally IX:* Available creatures are elemental, elder (any).

## UNCOMMON ATHASIAN LANGUAGES

| Language | Typical User |
|---|---|
| Ancient Halfling (dead language) | Historical texts, psionic lore |
| Draconic | Dragon-kings, arcane texts |
| Draxa (dead language) | Historical texts |
| Psurlonese | Psurlons |
| Yuan-ti | Yuan-ti |



# the Dark Sun DM's Guide

**Written by David Noonan**
**Cartography by Robert Lazzaretti**
**Art by Chris Trevas & James Ryman**

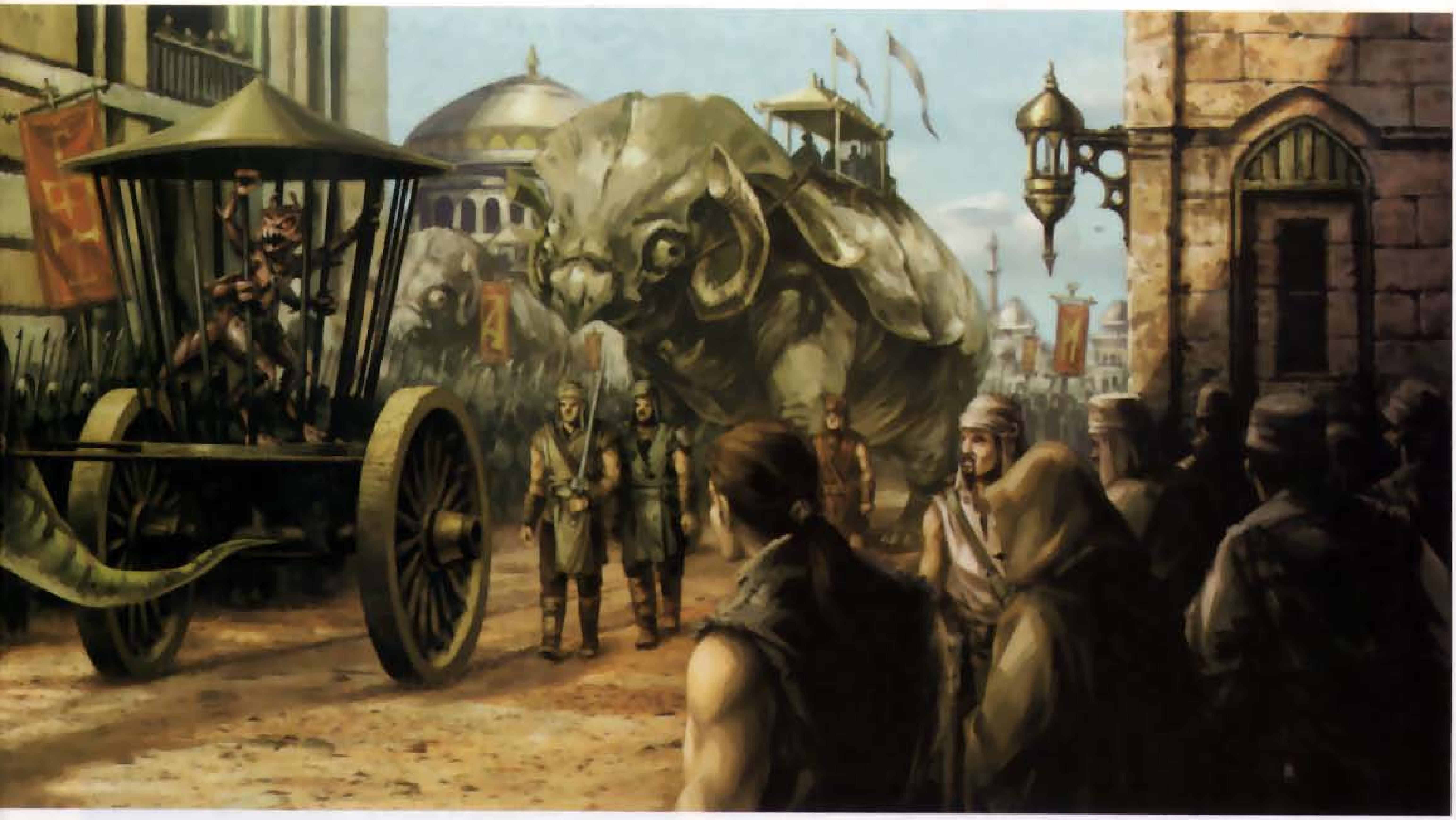
Welcome to a desert world ruled by sinister dragon-kings, where only the fittest survive the heat of the sun, the predations of horrid monsters, and the intrigues of their fellows. The *DARK SUN DM's Guide* you're about to read describes the Tablelands, a relatively hospitable part of the arid world of Athas. Seven city-states rule the Tablelands, although their reach doesn't extend far beyond their walls. The desert wastes between the city-states are home to strange monsters, bandit tribes, and ancient ruins.

DARK SUN characters fight in gladiator matches, guard caravans from desert bandits, free slaves from cruel masters, and perhaps overthrow the evil dragon-kings that rule the city-states. They'll be more powerful than PCs in other D&D games, but they'll need every advantage to survive in such an inhospitable world.

DARK SUN is fundamentally a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS campaign, changed just enough to bring the desert world of Athas to life. Psionics are integral to the setting; you'll need the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* to fully explore the world of DARK SUN. Most real-world animals don't exist on Athas, replaced instead with strange (and often psionic) creatures. All PCs know at least one or two psionic powers, regardless of their class.

DARK SUN is also an environment of hardship and scarcity. Due to desert temperatures that reach 150 degrees at midday, few creatures wear heavy armor. Metal is so scarce and precious that bone and obsidian are fashioned into crude but deadly weapons. Even magic can be treacherous; wizards face the continual temptation to destroy what little life remains on Athas in exchange for greater arcane power.

Because Athas is such a dangerous place, the character races are all more powerful than their standard D&D equivalents. Humans, for example, have higher ability scores than those described in the *Player's Handbook*, and they have one or more innate psionic powers. Elves, half-elves, dwarves, and halflings are likewise distinct both culturally and mechanically from their *Player's Handbook* counterparts.



DARK SUN also introduces other PC races to the mix, including aarakocras (nomadic bird-men), half-giants (massive creatures bred as slaves), muls (incredibly tough half-dwarves), pterrans (savage lizard creatures), and thri-kreen (four-armed mantis warriors). This incarnation of the DARK SUN setting adds two new races taken from the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*: the elan (cerebral creatures created through psionic ritual) and the maenads (wiry humanoids who are stern in peace and fierce in war).

Sooner or later, most DARK SUN campaigns pit the PCs against one or more of the six dragon-kings, each of whom rule one of the city-states with a tyrannical fist. Once human, the dragon-kings are all epic-level wizards who've defiled Athas in exchange for becoming ageless dragons. Now they rule teeming metropolises with an army of clerics at their disposal, forcing their subjects to worship them as gods and using human sacrifice to sustain their evil power. Each dragon-king is a ready-made master villain for a DARK SUN campaign. Lower-level PCs will have to deal with the intrigues of a dragon-king's clerics and other agents, and the most powerful PCs may eventually to go toe-to-toe with the dragon-kings in a bid to free a city-state from tyranny.

DARK SUN campaigns can begin in or near any of the seven city-states, but two are particularly common choices: Urik and Tyr. Urik is an archetypal city-state, ruled by a cruel but powerful dragon-king named Hamanu. Urik has a powerful army capable of menacing neighboring city-states, and Hamanu continually plots against his fellows. Hamanu's clerics use draconian laws to subjugate Urik's population, but they're unable to completely quash the revolutionary cells that occasionally strike a blow for freedom by freeing slaves or sabotaging one of Hamanu's projects.

Tyr, on the other hand, is unique among the city-states because it's been free of the yoke of a dragon-king for three centuries. Because wizards helped overthrow Kalak the dragon-king, arcane spellcasters don't face the prohibitions and prejudice in Tyr that they do elsewhere. So far, Tyr has managed to weather attacks from other city-states and various coups and counterrevolutions from factions within the city. But the free city of Tyr and its nearby iron mines are a rich prize for the other dragon-kings, so the city's continued freedom is far from assured.

This *DARK SUN DM's Guide* describes the seven city-states in detail and tells of the monsters that inhabit the Tablelands between the city-states. The *DARK SUN Player's Handbook*, in *DRAGON* #319, has the races, classes, equipment, and everything else needed to create a DARK SUN character.

So sharpen your blood obsidian sword and polish your psicrystals. The world of DARK SUN awaits!

# A Guide to the Tablelands

At its heart, Dark Sun is still D&D. We've eliminated the orcs, changed the elves, and made the dragons exceedingly rare, but it's still the game you love—seen through the lens of a very different world.

Fundamentally, Dark Sun is a campaign setting where the bad guys have already won, and now they're merely squabbling over their ruined prize. Viewed from the outside, the major battles on Athas are evil versus evil. When Urik invades Nibenay, there's no noble banner for PCs to rally around, and no order of paladins in shining armor charges into the fray. Two epic-level evil spellcasters throw armies of slaves and conscripts at each other in a battle that continues until even the victor is too exhausted to continue.

Hope is just a small flicker in the world of Dark Sun. But that's what makes it all the more precious, and nourishing that flicker of hope is a central theme in the campaign setting. When the players can wreck the plans of corrupt templars, keep a cell of rebels safely hidden, free some slaves, and protect what remains of Athas's ecology, they've helped keep hope alive. The situation is dire on Athas. Many live in slavery, starvation and thirst are rampant, and leaders are cruel tyrants. The land is barren and inhospitable; over every sand dune lurks another psionic horror hunting down the weak.

Things are bad in the world of Dark Sun. That's why, even in a landscape bereft of water and metal, hope is the most precious commodity of all.

## Dark Sun Adventures

Unlike many campaign settings, adventures on Athas rarely involve crawling into a dark hole, fighting the monsters that live there, and taking their stuff back to town. To be sure, there are any number of ruins and fortresses—some of them underground—worth exploring. But Dark Sun adventures often connect to the theme of keeping the flicker of hope alive.

The following are some common adventure tropes for Dark Sun adventures.

**Revolution:** Tyrants—including some truly despicable villains—control most of the city-states. Many Dark Sun campaigns involve efforts to free the people of Athas from tyranny. Low-level PCs can free slaves, mid-level PCs can plot in revolutionary cells, and high-level PCs can threaten the very dragon-kings themselves. If your players like a mix of intrigue and action, a campaign based on a rebellion against one or more dragon-kings is a good choice.

In some ways, campaigns based in the city-state of Tyr are the reverse of the revolution trope. It's a place where a fundamentally good-intentioned leadership must quash coup attempts from sinister cults and shadowy cabals. This time it's the rebels who are evil, and the PCs keep hope alive by protecting the one city-state outside the reach of the dragon-kings.

**Ecological Fable:** In Dark Sun, sinister forces can gain more power for themselves by destroying nature. See any connections to real life? Dark Sun is a world that's been almost completely destroyed by power-hungry dragon-kings and lower-level defilers. Just as the rebel cells in the cities try to maintain hope by battling the tyrants, so too do the defenders of the wilderness keep hope alive by repairing the devastation the defilers have left in their wake.

### ATHAS AND THE PLANES

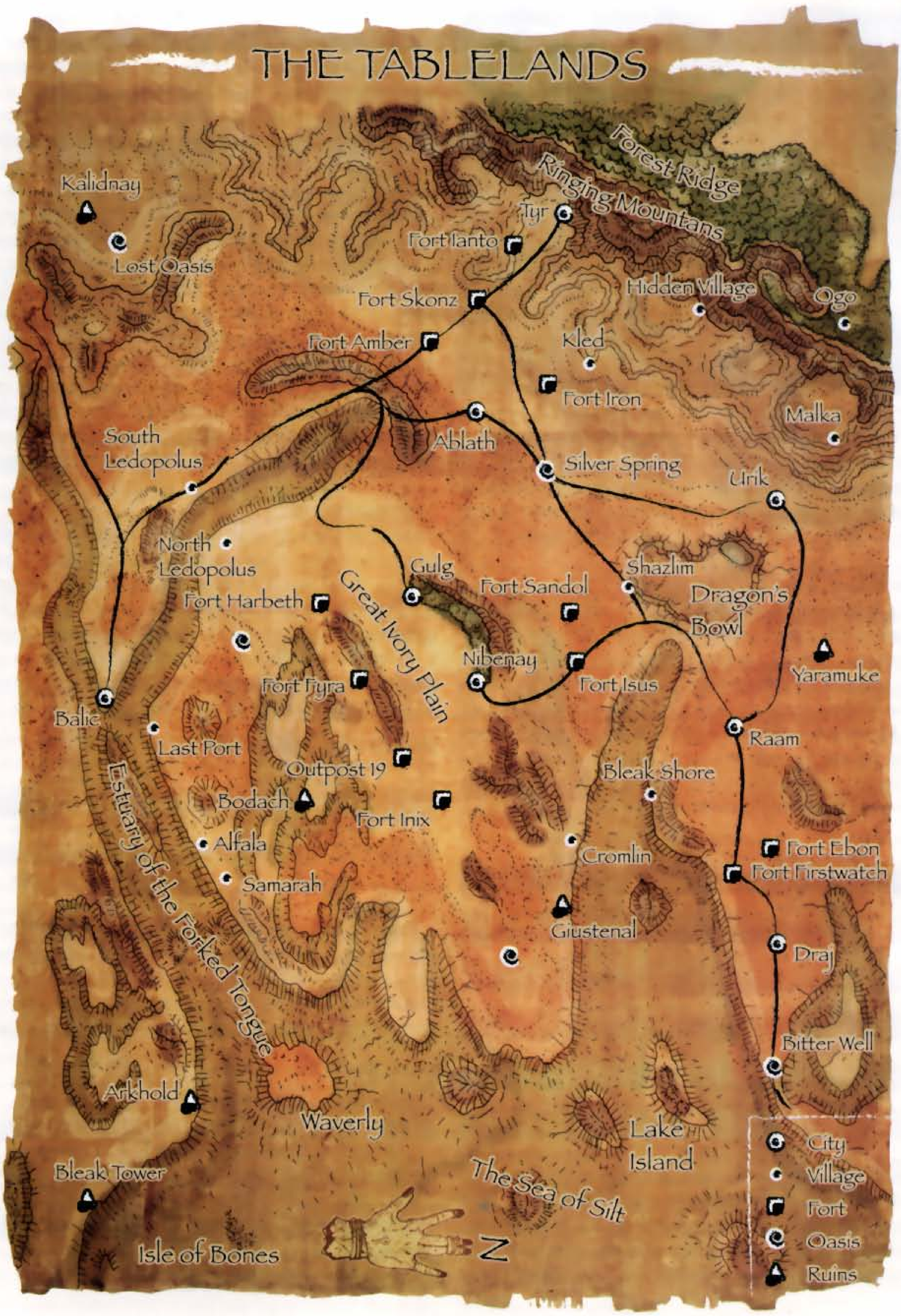
Most Dark Sun campaigns work best if the action takes place on Athas itself. The Material Plane is in crisis, and the characters' efforts to preserve life and nurture freedom on Athas are central to the world of Dark Sun. Accordingly, the Dark Sun cosmology is as simple as possible, providing access to other planes of existence without making them particularly desirable places to visit.

Athas is the Material Plane, of course, and it coexists with the Ethereal Plane (called "the Gray" by the Athasians who know of its existence) and the Plane of Shadow (called "the Black"). Beyond the Gray and the Black are the four Elemental Planes of Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. There aren't any Outer Planes; outsiders live on more hospitable parts of the Elemental Planes or in the Gray or the Black.

Casting spells such as *etherealness* takes the spellcaster to the Gray, a smoke-bound place where a translucent, insubstantial version of the Material Plane can be seen. Visitors to the Gray can also will themselves to float beyond the parts of the Gray that touch the Material Plane. This functions like the Deep Ethereal (described on p. 55 of the *Manual of the Planes*), but the destination is a hazy, featureless void beyond time and space itself. This part of the Gray functions just like the Astral Plane, except that astral pools lead only to the elemental planes, the Black, and back to the Material Plane. Distant regions of the Gray also have cosmic wellsprings from which spring great gouts of pure, positive energy (effectively functioning as a Positive Energy Plane).

The *shadow walk* spell provides access to the Black, a continually shifting, twisted place that imperfectly mirrors the Material Plane—much like the Plane of Shadow described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Like the Gray, the Black has regions far from the Material Plane accessible to travelers with the will and courage to visit them. With an act of will, the dark reflections of the Material Plane fade away, and the traveler walks the alien landscapes of the deep Black. Somewhere within this part of the Black is the prison of Rajaat, discoverer of arcane magic and creator of the dragon-kings. Other regions of the Black are suffused with negative energy, functioning as a Negative Energy Plane.

The four Elemental Planes have landscapes dominated by the relevant element, as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. They are populated by all manner of outsiders, some good and some evil. If you create your own monsters for a Dark Sun game, create some outsiders from the Elemental Planes that function like the angels, demons, and devils of a traditional D&D game. Some elementals and outsiders rival the dragon-kings themselves in personal power, so they make good long-term patrons or campaign-climax villains.


THE TABLELANDS
Forest Ridge
Ringing Mountains
Kalidnay
Tyr
Fort Ianto
Lost Oasis
Fort Skonz
Hidden Village
Ogo
Fort Amber
Kled
Fort Iron
Malka
Ablath
South Ledopolus
Silver Spring
Urik
North Ledopolus
Shazlim
Gulg
Fort Sandol
Dragon's Bowl
Fort Harbeth
Great Ivory Plain
Nibenay
Yaramuke
Fort Fyra
Fort Isus
Balic
Raam
Last Port
Outpost 19
Bleak Shore
Bodach
Fort Inix
Alfala
Fort Ebon
Cromlin
Fort Firstwatch
Samarah
Estuary of the Forked Tongue
Giustenal
Draj
Bitter Well
Arkhold
Waverly
Lake Island
Bleak Tower
The Sea of Silt
Isle of Bones
N
City
Village
Fort
Oasis
Ruins

**Survival:** One way to emphasize the tenuous nature of hope in DARK SUN campaigns is to create adventures in which the PCs' goal is simply to survive. At the end of the adventure is no treasure chest, no cheering crowd, and no grateful rescued maiden. The successful characters are simply still alive when it's all over. Often these adventures involve surviving in the wilderness for long periods of time, dealing with both natural hazards, vicious monsters, and heartless desert raiders.

The urban version of the survival trope is the gladiatorial arena. Different arenas have different rules, but it's often "kill or be killed." While the characters can earn a measure of fame (and perhaps even some money) from gladiator matches, the primary goal is survival. (If you want more ideas for gladiator adventures, see Chapter 4 of the *Complete Warrior* or DRAGON #303).

Survival adventures are a good way of reminding players that the world of DARK SUN is a harsh, unforgiving place. But don't relentlessly throw the PCs into one survival situation after another, because a steady diet of survival-only adventures can be demoralizing to the players. Use a survival adventure to emphasize how tough Athasian life is and how precious hope can be. Then give the PCs an adventure where they can take a tangible step that nurtures that hope.

## Dark Sun Time

The standard calendar on Athas is the Calendar of Kings, which measures time from the founding of the city-states and the start of the Green Age more than 14,000 years ago. It's currently the Year of Desert's Reverence in the 194th King's Age.

Each King's Age is 77 years long, and each year within an age has its own name that depends on two astronomical patterns: the endlean cycle and the seofean cycle. The name of a particular year is simply a combination of the endlean cycle name and the seofean cycle name.

| Endlean Cycle | Seofean Cycle |
|---|---|
| Ral's | Fury |
| Friend's | Contemplation |
| Desert's | Vengeance |
| Priest's | Slumber |
| Wind's | Defiance |
| Dragon's | Reverence |
| Mountain's | Agitation |
| King's | |
| Silt's | |
| Enemy's | |
| Guthay's | |

With each new year, the calendar simply moves to the next endlean name and the next seofean name. If it's the Year of Desert's Reverence, the next year will be the Year of Priest's Agitation, then the Year of Wind's Fury. After every Year of Guthay's Agitation, a new King's Age begins with a Year of Ral's Fury.

A year is 375 days long and divided into three 125-day phases: high sun, sun descending, and sun ascending. The phases are marked by slight differences in the sun's astronomical behavior; there aren't seasonal differences in the weather or the length of daylight. Most denizens of the city-states simply refer to a particular day as the "51st of High Sun" or the "124th of Sun Descending."

A day is divided into 24 hours, called "bells" for the hourly chimes that ring in most city-states. Because sunrise and sunset are exactly 12 hours apart on Athas, they're used to mark the time as well. For example, most workers get out of the heat by 6 bells after sunrise, return to manual labor at 9 bells after sunrise, eat supper at 2 bells after sunset, and fall asleep by 5 bells after sunset. Each new day begins at sunrise.

Previous DARK SUN campaigns started in the 190th King's Age. We've moved the timeline forward to create a "safe harbor" where you can set your campaign without worrying about continuity with published DARK SUN materials. But you can use those sourcebooks and adventures as inspirations for your game—they represent an important time of upheaval in Athas's history.

## Demographics

The rules in Chapter 5 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* apply, except that each of Athas's metropolises has a magical power center—the dragon-king who rules it. The sole exception within the known parts of Athas is the city of Tyr, which has a conventional power center—a squabbling council of nobles.

To figure out the highest-level psionic characters in a community, consult the table below as a supplement to the similar table in Chapter 5 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*.

### HIGHEST-LEVEL PSIONIC LOCALS

| Class | Character Level |
|---|---|
| Psion | 1d8 + community modifier |
| Psychic Warrior | 1d6 + community modifier |
| Soulknife | 1d3 + community modifier |
| Wilder | 1d4 + community modifier |

Racial demographics vary widely on Athas. Slave tribes have disproportionate numbers of muls and half-giants (described in *Dragon* #319), while the city-states teem with humans and half-elves. The following table replaces the similar table in Chapter 5 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*.

### RACIAL MIX OF COMMUNITIES

| City-State | Smaller Settlement | Slave Tribe |
|---|---|---|
| 80% human | 70% human | 40% human |
| 8% mul | 16% one other race* | 25% mul |
| 5% dwarf | 6% half-elf | 15% half-giant |
| 4% half-elf | 5% dwarf | 5% half-elf |
| 2% half-giant | 2% mul | 5% dwarf |
| 1% other races* | 1% other races* | 10% other races* |

* Aarakocra, elan, elf, halfling, maenad, pterran, thri-kreen. These races are either relatively rare or they tend to congregate in their own communities.

## City-States of Athas

The Tablelands, Athas's settled region, have seven city-states, each several thousand years old and ruled by a dragon-king and legions of templars, clerics who serve the dragon-kings they consider living gods. While smaller communities eke out an existence across the Tablelands, the city-states have the armies and the magical might to dominate the region. But the dragon-kings are bitter rivals, so no single city-state rises above the others for long.

About 300 years ago, in the Year of Priest's Defiance of the 190th King's Age, upheaval swept across the city-states as the dragon-king of Tyr, Kalak, died trying to achieve godhood. Rajaat, an ancient arcanist who created the dragon-kings, briefly escaped his extraplanar prison to kill Tectuktitlay of Draj and banish Andropinis of Balic. Abalech-Re, dragon-queen of Raam, died in battle with a human wizard. For a time, only Urik, Nibenay, and Gulg had dragon-kings ruling them, and many revolutionaries proclaimed the rise of an "Age of Heroes."

Alas, it was not to be. A kaisharga (psionic lich) known as Dregoth the Savior seized control of Raam and became its dragon-king. The templars of Draj created a figurehead to rule as the new dragon-king, but their puppet, a boy named Atzetuk, secretly developed enough power to become a true dragon-king in his own right. Balic fell into decades of chaos, but Andropinis eventually returned from extraplanar exile at the head of a maenad army. Only the city-state of Tyr never replaced its dragon-king.

But the time of upheaval tested the dragon-kings' ability to enforce their will on their subjects. Even the strongest dragon-kings spent decades defending their holdings from the predations of their rivals and the threat of internal strife. Only now are they beginning to exert their influence beyond the walls of their cities and plot the demise of their rivals.

## Urik

If there's an Athasian city-state that's stronger than the others, Urik is that city. The dragon-king Hamanu has survived the upheaval of recent King's Ages with his city intact. Urik's military is second to none, and Hamanu's templars keep the streets of Urik orderly with a strict code of laws and swift punishment for lawbreakers.

**Demographics:** Urik has the standard demographics for an Athasian city-state.

**Lands:** Urik lies in the middle of the sandy wastes on the northwest edge of the Tablelands. Sandstorms in the area are often fierce, and it is said that only Hamanu's magic keeps the sand dunes from slowly burying Urik. A small, relatively verdant belt surrounds the city for a few miles in every direction, and almost every square inch is tilled to provide food for Urik's teeming masses.

The Ringing Mountains are visible on the horizon west of Urik, although miles of rocky badlands separate Urik from its obsidian mines there. Stony barrens dominate the landscape to the east of the city, where a vast basin known as the Dragon's Bowl holds the tainted waters of Lake Pit.

### HOW TOUGH IS A DRAGON-KING?

While they often demand that their subjects worship them, the dragon-kings aren't deities. They are the most powerful individuals in the world, however, combining the versatility of an epic spellcaster with the sheer toughness of a dragon. Plus, they have countless high-level templars and armies at their command.

Complete stats for a dragon-king would be useful only to the small number of D&D groups that actually face one in combat. All dragon-kings are epic-level wizards who've performed a lengthy ritual required to turn them into a dragon—a ritual that gives them epic psionic power as well.

If you need to run a dragon-king on the fly, assume they have the physical statistics of a great wyrm dragon, the spellcasting power of a 22nd-level wizard and the psionic power of a 22nd-level psion.

**Settlements:** Urik controls the small city of Malka to the northwest, near its most productive obsidian mines. It also has smaller fortified towns in the Ringing Mountains that guard the passes to the Forest Ridge. The small city of Shazlim to the southeast is currently under Urik's control, although Nibenay actually built it and wants it back.

The yellow walls of Urik itself are one of the greatest architectural marvels of Athas. The city's buildings on the other hand are square and squat with little ornamentation. Hamanu has walled off a section of the city, turning it into a complex of palaces and gardens known as Destiny's Kingdom.

**Power Groups:** Hamanu tolerates no dissent, and because he's had uninterrupted control of his city-state for countless centuries, he has the authority and power to quash any potential rivals.

No one vies for power with Hamanu, but various power groups vie with each other to garner Hamanu's favor. In particular, the templars who control Urik's armies have long had a rivalry with the templars responsible for keeping the city safe and productive. Fights are common between the Legion and the City Guard over both minor slights and major decisions. The Legion wants to march on Tyr or Nibenay, while the City Guard warns that a military campaign would leave Urik overextended and vulnerable.

**Beliefs:** Worship of Hamanu is mandatory in Urik, with each citizen and slave expected to bow in the direction of Destiny's Kingdom every sunset and sunrise. Hamanu's code of laws is legendary, and his templars enthusiastically mete out justice for every infraction they see. Laws regulate almost every aspect of life in Urik, from how to prepare food to which side of the road to walk on.

**Commerce:** Urik is well known as Athas's greatest producer of obsidian and blood obsidian weapons. It also exports other gems and minerals gleaned from its mines in the Ringing Mountains.

Weapons made of obsidian and blood obsidian are 10% cheaper in Urik, and the city of Malka counts as a large city for the gp limit on weapons and armor. But Urik craves iron and will pay 75% of a used item's value if it's made of iron. For example, an adventurer could sell an iron falchion in Urik for 562 cp rather than the usual 375 cp.

Urik imports iron (usually from Tyr) and food (usually from Nibenay). Both situations vex Hamanu greatly. Urik's vaunted legions are often victorious on the battlefield but unable to capitalize on their gains because they must pause and re-equip their fragile obsidian weapons. In the past, Urik has tried without success to seize control of the iron mines outside Tyr. The farms immediately surrounding Urik aren't large enough to sustain Urik's citizens on more than a starvation diet, so a war with Nibenay would lead to food shortages almost immediately.

**Language:** Citizens of Urik tend to speak slowly, peppering their sentences with frequent references to Hamanu such as "may the Lion grant it" or "such is the Code of Hamanu." Because most adults have spent time serving Urik's Legions or City Guard, they are apt to phrase requests as commands, which residents of other city-states sometimes find rude. Rather than ask for a drink of water, a Urikite will simply say, "hand me that jug, citizen."

**Arts and Crafts:** The carver's art is held in very high regard in Urik, particularly stonecarving (although only buildings in Destiny's Kingdom get architectural ornamentation). Particularly common are statuettes of lions carved from bone (1d10 × 10 cp), granite (1d6 × 100 cp), or obsidian (3d6 × 100 cp).

**Entertainment:** Roughly twice a phase, Hamanu himself leads a grand parade of templars, legionaires, and circus-like curiosities through the streets of Urik. Attendance is mandatory at these parades for all free citizens, and most slavemasters use parade-viewing as a reward for good behavior. During these parades, Hamanu takes the form of a half-man, half-lion dressed in ornate, golden armor.

As in the other city-states, gladiatorial spectacles are popular, and Urik has several arenas and a daily fight schedule. Particularly popular in Urik are group events featuring two "armies" of gladiators (each with roughly a dozen combatants) that battle to the death before the delighted crowd.

## Urik Characters

Characters who come from Urik likely spent time in the city-state's military, whether as slave conscripts or free citizens in a better-equipped "elite legion." Hamanu drafts every able-bodied citizen he can, usually for a year unless he's gearing up for war.

**Adventuring Urikites:** Most PCs from Urik will be of lawful alignment and have a sense of self-discipline from their time under Hamanu's banners. The majority are fighters, although Urik has several academies of psychic warriors and psions as well.

Alternatively, a PC from Urik might be driven to the life of a wandering adventurer because he found the myriad laws of Urik too stifling. Such a PC might be disillusioned with Hamanu's rule after a friend or family member was punished out of proportion for a "crime" in Urik. What revolutionaries exist in Urik are surely driven by their hatred of the Code of Hamanu, which epitomizes law without the tempering influences of justice or mercy.

Urikites often treat visiting adventurers with a circumspect curiosity. Hamanu closed off the city to the outside world for decades after the upheaval of the 190th King's Age, and the city receives few visitors other than trade caravans. Thus Urikites tend to be curious about the outside world, but they don't want to ask too many questions and attract the attention of the templars. Urik's laws regarding contact with foreigners are complex, and some Urikites reflexively shun outsiders rather than risk breaking a law.

**Character Development:** Many PCs who spend time in Urik take a few ranks in Knowledge (local) so they don't break the Code of Hamanu. A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check suffices to know what Urik's laws are on a common topic (everyday commerce, violent crime, etc.), and a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check reveals law on more esoteric topics (building codes, import/export law, etc.).

One of Urik's great draws for adventuring PCs is the King's Academy, a huge institute devoted to psionic learning within Destiny's Kingdom. Hamanu's templars take children who show signs of psionic prowess to the King's Academy rather than conscripting them into the army, and recently Hamanu has provided limited access to visitors and older citizens of the city-state. Psionic characters can receive training there, but they must contend with the Bureau of Security, which carefully monitors them and assesses their psionic strength.

Urik also has several training centers for psychic warriors, including the Temple of of the South Wind and the Academy of the Phoenix. The templars monitor these training centers, but they don't receive the level of scrutiny that those at the King's Academy receive.

**Character Names:** Many Urikite names have a Babylonian sound to them. Common names include: Anuta, Mardukai, Kinurta, Assurda, Tukulti, Nutakkil, Shusku, Resha-Ishi, Ashared, Belkali, Shuqa, Erida, Shamsi.

## Notable Urikites

Nabu Taekad is a high inquisitor in Urik's Bureau of Security. A graduate of the King's Academy and a templar, Taekad's job is to monitor unusual or powerful visitors to the city using both his psionic powers and the divine spells granted by Hamanu. If the PCs attract the templars' attention during an adventure, they may send Taekad to investigate. Unless he's undercover, Taekad travels with a retinue of four to six 5th-level templars.

**Nabu Taekad, Half-elf Clr5/Psion (Telepath) 5**: CR 10; Medium humanoid (half-elf); HD 5d8+5d4+10; hp 44; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +6 melee (1d8/×3, *+1 iron spear*); SA spells, psionics, rebuke undead; SQ elf traits; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +14; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14.

*Skills:* Bluff +9, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Gather Information +11, Intimidate +10, Listen +4, Psicraft +8, Search +6, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +11, Spot +4.

*Feats:* Combat Casting, Inquisitor, Investigator, Persuasive, Psionic Endowment, Psionic Meditation.

*Languages:* Common, Dwarven, Elven, Maenadi.

*Spells Prepared* (5/4+1/3+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic* (2), *light, read magic;* 1st—*bane, cause fear, cure light wounds, sanctuary*, shield of faith;* 2nd—*calm emotions*, cure moderate wounds, hold person, zone of truth;* 3rd—*bestow curse, cure serious wounds, protection from energy**.

*Domain Spell; *Domains:* Law (cast Law spells at +1 caster level), Protection (*protective ward* grants +5 resistance bonus on next save, 1/day).

*Powers Known (*43 PP; save DC 13 + power level*): 1st—attraction, crystal shard, demoralize, empathy, mindlink, psionic charm;* 2nd—*aversion, brain lock, detect hostile intent, read thoughts, suggestion;* 3rd—*danger sense, dispel psionics, psionic blast.*

*Possessions: +1 bronze breastplate, +1 iron spear, headband of intellect +2, +3 cloak of protection.*

## Urik Encounters

It takes a great deal of effort to approach Urik without attracting the attention of one of its roving legion patrols.

*EL 7:* Four 1st-level fighters on kanks. They have orders to stop and question any travelers in the immediate vicinity. Their treasure includes the listed gear and a *tablet of sending* (1,400 cp), which when broken sends a brief verbal message to headquarters.

**Urik Mounted Legionnaire:** Human Ftr1; CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d10+1; hp 6; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/×3, iron lance) or +4 ranged (1d8+3/×3, composite longbow); SA psionics; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Ride +7, Spot +5.

*Feats:* Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack.

*Languages:* Common.

*Powers Known (*3 PP; save DC 10 + power level*): 1st—missive.*

*Possessions:* Iron lance, composite longbow (+3 Str), 20 iron arrows, shell armor, buckler, kank, saddle, harness, bit and bridle.

## Urik Adventures

Because Hamanu takes an active hand in managing the affairs of Urik, there's less of an organized resistance to his rule. As soon as Hamanu or the templars uncover the existence of a revolutionary cell, they crush it ruthlessly.

Accordingly, many Urik adventures involve aspects of the city other than the effort to overthrow a dragon-king.

- The PCs are novice gladiators—willingly or coerced—who team up to survive and potentially win a "tournament of armies" at one of Urik's arenas. At first they'll face other low-level conscripts, but eventually they'll do battle with monsters and well-trained gladiator teams.
- A high-ranking member of House Stel (Urik's largest merchant house) hires the characters as extra guards on a shipment of iron from Tyr to Urik, despite warnings from other merchants that elven raiders have made the main road unsafe.
- A high-ranking templar offers the characters power (magic, political, or otherwise) if they can eliminate the taint from Lake Pit.

## Raam

Raam, called the "City of the Dead," is ruled by Dregoth, an undead dragon-king who once ruled the ruined city-state of Guistenal. He seized control of Raam more than 200 years ago, transforming it into a dark city where the living walk side by side with the dead.

**Demographics:** Raam had typical demographics before the coming of Dregoth. Now fully 20% of the city's population are Athasian zombies, and another 10% are skeletons. The zombies and skeletons perform most of the city's manual labor, so Raam has few laborer slaves.

**Lands:** Raam lies in the center of scrub plains surrounded on all sides by stony barrens. To the south is a small mountain range that separates the city-state from the Sea of Silt.

**Settlements:** Dregoth is aggressively building forts and settlements for miles in every direction. In addition to Raam itself, he controls the small city of Break Shore at the edge of the Sea of Silt, and he's building towns throughout the stony barrens. These new settlements produce little of value, so their purpose is a mystery.

But Raam's greatest building project is on the ruins of Fort Ebon, where the psionic lich has an army encamped, ready to defend the ruins against an incursion by Draj's forces. Dregoth has hundreds of undead laborers rebuilding the fort—but rebuilding it as a sinister spire of black basalt with ornate parapets and (it is rumored) a vast underground labyrinth.

**Power Groups:** Within Dregoth's hierarchy, there's a rivalry between the dragon-king's living templars and his undead minions. The undead have the upper hand, because many templars are reanimated as undead and thus support the faction they may have opposed in life. But the living templars are very useful to Dregoth because they can rebuke and command the low-level undead that comprise much of Raam's labor force.

Two other factions have a measure of power in Raam. The M'Ke merchant house was the de facto ruler of the city for much of the time between Abalach-Re's death and Dregoth's arrival, and they still wield a great deal of influence in commerce and among the nobility. House M'Ke would be pleased if the city-state weren't overrun with undead—they miss the days when they could bribe or coerce a templar into letting them have their way. The house doesn't oppose Dregoth directly, but it wants as little to do with the undead minions as possible.

Forced underground once Dregoth arrived, the Yellow Monastery is a well-organized group of revolutionaries dedicated to the establishment of a free Raam. Aiding the Yellow Monastery is punishable by death, but many of Raam's free citizens view the rebels kindly because during the days when Raam had no ruler, the monastery managed to feed and protect those in its neighborhood. The monastery building lies vacant and ruined today, but the rebels plot revolution from basements and catacombs across Raam.

**Beliefs:** Dregoth teaches the denizens of Raam that death is nothing more than a change in state, not a barrier to continued work for the city-state. Many citizens have become inured to the undead working in their midst. But for those who break his laws, Dregoth promises a variety of fates worse than death, including unending torture, the death and reanimation of family members, and other cruel punishments.

**Commerce:** Raam neither imports or exports much. The few trade caravans that come to the City of the Dead bring luxury goods or iron, and they leave with Raamin pottery.

Most goods in Raam cost the normal amount. Settlements under Raam's control are considered to be one size larger for the gp limit for clerical scrolls and magic items with a necromancy aura.

**Language:** Few denizens of Raam willingly use the words "dead" or "death." They almost always resort to a euphemism such as "crossing over," "passing on," or "walking beyond us." A loyal Raamin considers the city-state's appellation "City of the Dead" to be a great insult. Raam's templars sometimes refer to Raam as "City of Creation," but no one else does.

**Arts and Crafts:** Pottery and ceramics are a specialty in Raam, and the smoke from the city's many kilns often makes it hard for the living residents to breathe. Typical treasures from Raam include painted funeral urns (3d6 × 10 cp), glazed ceramic tableware (1d6 × 100 cp), and fine porcelain statuettes (2d6 × 100 cp, or 4d6 × 100 cp if adorned with gems).

**Entertainment:** Raam has little in the way of public entertainment, because a third of its citizenry is utterly disinterested in even the most beguiling song. Bards perform for Raam's nobles, but lower-class citizens get little entertainment beyond the walls of the city-state's arenas.

As one might expect, gladiator fights in Raam are almost always to the death. One particularly popular battle pits two living gladiators against each other. When one dies, the battle is paused so the loser is reanimated as an Athasian zombie (p. 50), then the battle begins anew. Some intelligent undead make a career for themselves in Raam's arenas, for battles between undead gladiators and living ones are common. But by Dregoth's decree, the undead never face each other in Raam's arenas.

## Raam Characters

Raam is an unusual place for a PC to come from. One way or another, those who hail from Raam are marked by their connection with death.

**Adventuring Raamins:** A typical adventurer from Raam is probably knowledgeable about undead and necromancy. Many grow disgusted with the uncaring zombies and the pervasive evil of Raam and take up an adventurer's life to escape a dismal existence that even death won't end.

Raam is a good choice for a player who wants to play a disaffected templar. Because the undead seem to be taking over, many templars are being forced out of Dregoth's hierarchy or dropping out when they can't stand working for the undead anymore. If you like playing characters who try to make amends for past misdeeds, an exiled templar from Raam is an excellent choice.

Living residents of Raam tend to be welcoming of visiting adventurers, while the undead largely ignore travelers. Dregoth and the templars are too busy with various building projects to pay attention to visitors who keep a low profile.

**Character Development:** Adventurers in Raam will find that anti-undead spells such as *hide from undead* and *searing light* are particularly useful. But telepaths and enchanters soon find adventuring in Raam more difficult because all undead are immune to mind-affecting spells and powers.

Despite this, psionic characters may be drawn to Raam for another reason. The oldest center of psionic learning on Athas, the Psiumarkh, is headquartered in Raam. The psionic masters of the Psiumarkh take great pains to demonstrate their neutrality and utter disinterest in city-state politics or power struggles. Even when the city was in chaos after Abalach-Re's death, the Psiumarkh simply closed its doors and ignored the riots around it. The Psiumarkh is home to several small colleges and mysterious cabals of psions and wilders, including several factions of the Order. But even the most bizarre psionic cults within its walls are careful not to draw Dregoth's attention by meddling in Raam's affairs.

**Character Names:** Many Raamin names sound like those of ancient Persia. Common names include: Ardu, Achaemon, Athiya, Buxsha, Cyaxares, Hytapses, Gobrya, Kuru, Thuxra, Vahauka, Shathrita, Vaumisa, Kudra-Kara.

## Notable Raamins

Otanes Thispaya is a templar in Raam's Hall of Seers, spending his time researching ancient lore and performing divinations for other templars and Raam's richer citizens. If the characters have esoteric questions about death, undeath, or the Black (see the Athasian Cosmology sidebar, page 62), their inquiries might lead them to Otanes.

**Otanes Thispaya, Human Clr13:** CR 13; Medium humanoid (human); HD 13d8+13; hp 71; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +9; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4–1/19–20, iron dagger); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4–1/19–20, iron dagger);

SA psionics, spells, rebuke undead; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +14; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 22, Cha 14.

*Skills:* Concentration +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Spellcraft +17.

*Feats:* Brew Potion, Craft Staff, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration.

*Languages:* Common, Ignan.

*Spells Prepared* (6/7+1/7+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; save DC 16 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic* (2), *guidance, mending, purify food and drink;* 1st—*bless, cause fear**, *command* (2), *comprehend languages, deathwatch, sanctuary, shield of faith;* 2nd—*augury* (2), *calm emotions, detect thoughts**, *hold person* (2), *lesser restoration, zone of truth;* 3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance**, *cure serious wounds, dispel magic, helping hand, locate object, speak with dead;* 4th—*cure critical wounds, discern lies, divination* (2)*, *restoration, sending;* 5th—*commune* (2), *raise dead, scrying, true seeing**; 6th—*banishment, find the path**, *heal, word of recall;* 7th—*legend lore**, *resurrection.*

*Domain Spell; *Domains:* Death (death touch 1/day, damage 13d6), Knowledge (cast divination spells at +1 caster level, all Knowledge skills are class skills).

*Powers Known (*11 PP; save DC 12 + power level*):* 1st—*detect psionics;* 2nd—*psionic identify;* 3rd—*ubiquitous vision.*

*Possessions: Staff of divination* (15 charges remaining), *periapt of wisdom +4,* iron dagger.

## Raam Encounters

Encounters in Raam almost always involve undead, and they're particularly effective when you put an evil templar in command of low-level undead.

*EL 7:* A typical city guard patrol in Raam consists of a 5th-level cleric and three Athasian zombies (in this case, former criminals and 1st-level rogues). Their gear is their only treasure.

**Raam Templar Patrol, Human Clr5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d8+5; hp 27; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+1, morningstar); SA psionics, spells, rebuke undead; SQ —; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 18, Cha 12.

*Skills:* Concentration +9, Knowledge (religion) +7.

*Feats:* Combat Casting Extra Turning, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

*Languages:* Common.

*Spells Prepared* (5/4+1/3+1/2+1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic* (2), *guidance, light;* 1st—*cause fear**, *command, doom, entropic shield, magic weapon;* 2nd—*death knell**, *desecrate, hold person, silence;* 3rd—*animate dead**, *dispel magic, magic vestment.*

*Domain Spell; *Domains:* Chaos (cast Chaos spells at +1 caster level), Death (death touch 1/day, damage 5d6).

*Powers Known (*6 PP; save DC 11 + power level*):* 1st—*demoralize;* 2nd—*mental disruption.*

*Possessions: +1 bronze breastplate,* light wooden shield, masterwork bronze morningstar, *cloak of protection +1,* scroll of *cure critical wounds.*

## Raam Adventures

Raam has an active resistance (led by the Yellow Monastery), an aggressive dragon-king, and many mysterious building projects across the region While Raam doesn't make a good choice for a "home base" city for the PCs, it can be the site of a memorable adventure or two.

- The characters are hired by House M'Ke to help guard a caravan leaving Raam. Along the way, they learn that their cargo consists of dead revolutionaries that Dregoth's templars wish to animate and turn against their former allies. The rebels are paying House M'Ke a small fortune to get the bodies beyond Dregoth's reach.
- The characters find a papyrus map detailing a major cache of magic weapons underneath Fort Ebon. But they've got to get past Raam's army outpost, the undead laborers, and a mysterious presence below.
- One of Dregoth's highest-ranking templars promises that "secrets beyond life and death" await anyone who can reclaim Dregoth's former home, the now-ruined city-state of Guistenal.

## Draj

While the people of Raam live in fear of the undead that surround them, the denizens of Draj fear the weekly "cullings" of the population for sacrificial victims. The dragon-king of Draj, Atzetuk, is responsible for a bloody reign of terror, using his templars to ritually slaughter dozens of freemen and slaves each week. Some say Atzetuk is mad with bloodlust, while others whisper of an arcane purpose behind the string of bloody sacrifices.

While the sacrificial rituals of Draj are notorious throughout the Tablelands, the city-state is also well known for its warrior culture and the relative freedom enjoyed by its nobles.

**Demographics:** Draj has the standard demographics for an Athasian city-state.

**Lands:** Draj sits in the center of a mud flat that interrupts the stony barrens north of the Sea of Silt. Even though the mud flat is cracked and parched much of the time, Draj is still the most fertile of the seven city-states and the only one that regularly exports food.

Northeast of Draj is the Basin of Un-Kar, a vast depression with a flat-topped mesa in the center of it. Many strange monsters emerge from the Basin of Un-Kar to menace the noble farms that suuround Draj. Both Draj's army and the private forces of the noble families spend much of their time fighting marauding monsters and starving tribes of elves and former slaves.

**Settlements:** A ziggurat the size of a small mountain, the Temple of the Two Moons is visible from every point in Draj.

Therein Atzetuk rules his city, and he personally performs many of the sacrifices from a platform at the summit of the ziggurat. The Temple of the Two Moons has channels carved into its sloping walls that extend throughout Draj, so that after a particularly large sacrifice, blood rushes in a veinlike pattern across the city.

The other notable buildings in Draj are the tecpans, lodgelike buildings where the nobles of the city meet. Unlike the other dragon-kings, Atzetuk gives the nobles a degree of autonomy, allowing them to make some policy decisions and police themselves. But the nobles' independence is more theoretical than concrete; nobles who thwart the will of Atzetuk are often chosen by templars for sacrifices atop the Temple of the Two Moons.

One final building in Draj bears mention: The ruins of the House of the Mind. Formerly a massive academy devoted to psionic learning, Atzetuk destroyed it and all inside when he became a dragon-king. By Atzetuk's decree, the ruins remain untouched, a constant reminder not to draw the wrath of the dragon-king. But once or twice a year, interlopers try to sneak into the rubble and extract a psionic item or other power source rumored to lie among the ruins. The templars catch some, and others simply don't come back, falling victim to a mysterious psionic force somewhere below the House of the Mind.

Atzetuk also controls a major trade oasis to the east, Bitter Well, and a stronghold along the road to Raam, Fort Firstwatch, where his armies observe the construction efforts at Fort Ebon with great interest and trepidation.

**Power Groups**: Atzetuk's templars, called Moon Priests, comprise the most powerful faction in Draj. Because high-ranking Moon Priests have the authority to "cull" anyone for sacrifice—noble, free citizen, or slave—they generally get what they want. However, they're less apt to meddle in the affairs of the merchant houses or nobles than their counterparts in other city-states because Atzetuk keeps them busy with various sacrifices and other rituals. Only when the security of the city-state is in question will the Moon Priests involve themselves in anything beyond the routine efforts required to keep Draj running.

When Draj's first dragon-king, Tectuktitlay, died almost 300 years ago, his templars conspired with powerful psions from the House of the Mind to install a boy named Atzetuk to the throne as Tectuktitlay's successor. The two groups planned to jointly control the boy as a figurehead, keeping their own positions of power secure and avoiding the riots and destruction that struck Raam and Balic when they lost their dragon-kings. At first their ruse was successful, but over time the templars and the House of the Mind started to disagree on matters of policy—and Atzetuk somehow learned more about magic and psionics than anyone thought possible. With the aid of a splinter group of templars, Atzetuk made the transformation into a true dragon-king, destroying the House of the Mind and cowing the rest of the templars. Once a figurehead, Atzetuk now wields the nigh-limitless power of a dragon-king.

While Atzetuk's templars are the most powerful group in Draj, the nobles wield more influence here than in other city-states. Many noble families control tracts of relatively fertile agricultural land and have become rich selling food and hemp to the merchant house of Tsalaxa for export. Draj's noble families are thus both rich and able to govern themselves—as long as they don't cross Atzetuk. Furthermore, the warrior culture of Draj demands that the head of each household be tested in battle, so the officer corps in the Draji army has as many nobles as it does templars.

House Tsalaxa is the most powerful merchant house in Draj. It has a reputation for ruthlessness and intrigue, but recently infighting among the Tsalaxa family has wracked the house, emptying its coffers. Those members of House Tsalaxa not caught up in the internal battle for control of the house are desperate for lucrative trade contracts and successful caravan trips.

Several groups of druids work secretly within the walls of Draj, while residents embittered by Atzetuk's sacrifices have formed rebel cells of their own. Thus far the templars have been able to quash rebel plots as they uncover them, sending the rebels on one-way trips to the top of the Temple of the Two Moons. But the druids are cautiously establishing a network of rebel cells. Once it grows strong enough, they'll try to overthrow Atzetuk or at least ruin whatever scheme is tied to the ritual sacrifices.

**Beliefs**: The dragon-king that founded Draj, Tectuktitlay, had a keen interest in having the denizens of the city-state worship him as a god-emperor. He established temples to himself across the city and made faith in Tectuktitlay and the twin moons mandatory. Atzetuk has continued this tradition, claiming a divine right to rule Draj—and eventually all of Athas, his templars promise.

Central to Atzetuk's religion is the belief that ritual sacrifices are required to ward off disasters and misfortune. Atzetuk's templars often point out that Draj was able to avoid much of the chaos that befell Raam and Balic after their dragon-kings died or disappeared. They likewise claim that the sacrifices keep a permanent hurricaine of dust and rain called the Cerulean Storm from moving northward and engulfing them.

Druids working secretly in Draj say that the sacrifices have nothing to do with protection against natural or manmade disasters. But they do have some purpose and often unleash powerful conjuration and transmutation magic, according to revolutionaries who've seen the sacrifices up close. The druids and other rebel cells in Draj would very much like to know the real reason for Atzetuk's state religion.

**Commerce:** The farms that surround Draj produce food—mostly staple grains—and hemp for clothes and rope. Some of the nobles have surreptitiously started growing sasuril, a fibrous tuber that produces a sensation of lassitude when infused into hot water (like a tea). Sasuril is illegal in all the city-states because it's highly addictive and it soon renders the user too sleepy to be productive. But for many on Athas, the drug is a release from an otherwise miserable existence.

Draj imports what metal and obsidian it can, but its biggest imports are both skilled and unskilled labor. Between the templars' sacrifices and the back-breaking farm work, life is particularly harsh for slaves in Draj. And once Atzetuk's reign of blood began, many skilled free citizens emigrated to other city-states or smaller communities rather than risk becoming sacrificial victims themselves.

**Language:** Residents of Draj are known throughout Athas for their characteristic bluntness. A Draji thinks nothing of saying "you smell bad," or "I charge higher prices when foreigners ask." Among the denizens of Draj, everyone's accustomed to direct talk, but outsiders regard the habit as unsettling and rude.

**Arts and Crafts:** Along with Gulg, Draj is a center for the textile arts on Athas. In particular, rugs and tapestries are regarded as high art, especially when cords that comprise them have been stained with various dyes to create colorful tapestry-mosaics. Typical treasures from Draj include abstract wall tapestries (1d6 × 100 cp), portrait tapestries (4d6 × 100 cp), and deep-pile floor rugs (1d4 × 1,000 cp).

**Entertainment:** Many of the sacrificial ceremonies at the moon temples across Draj are public spectacles that include dancing, singing, and in particular long orations that praise Atzetuk and provide homilies for Draj's citizenry. The templars who perform major sacrifices are among the most well-known residents of the city. A templar skilled in Perform (oration) can often whip a crowd into a bloodthirsty frenzy, then sate them with an elaborate execution. The public sacrifices are generally well-attended; the crowds gather for the entertainment, the religious sermons, and the free food and drink often available during the ceremonies.

Gladiator battles are also popular, though less so than in Urik or Raam. Many noble families own stables of gladiators, and by custom are bound to free one gladiator slave each season. The possibility of freedom is an attractive lure for many slaves toiling in the fields, and some nobles use gladiator status as a reward for good behavior and high productivity among their workers.

## Draj Characters

Draj is a dangerous place to live, but freemen and nobles there enjoy a greater degree of autonomy than elsewhere on Athas. And it's the city-state with the most active resistance to the rule of its dragon-king.

**Adventuring Draji:** Unless they have specific training in the diplomatic arts, many adventurers from Draj carry some of their characteristic bluntness with them when they adventure elsewhere. Expatriate Draji are relatively common, because many residents of the city leave when they draw the attention of templars before a culling. Others impose exile on themselves or join the underground when friends or family members are senselessly slaughtered on Atzetuk's altars.

Other adventurers from Draj retain some pride in their home city-state—especially those from the noble families. Draj's nobility combines a keen appreciation of military matters with a nascent sense of democratic—or at least oligarchic—ideals. Atzetuk may be a bloody tyrant, but Draj's nobility is proud of its traditions of autonomy, productivity, and martial prowess.

Most residents of Draj make at least a token effort to be hospitable to visitors. After all, they get fewer visitors than most city-states because they're on the edge of the Tablelands—and all of Athas has heard of the rivers of blood that stream from the Temple of the Two Moons. Travelers in Draj are likely to be treated well, as long as they don't take impolite comments from Draj natives personally.

**Character Development:** Fighters and rangers are more likely to come from Draj than rogues, clerics, or members of the psionic classes. When Atzetuk became a dragon-king, one of his first acts was to crush the House of the Mind, one of Athas's largest centers of psionic learning. Psionics is still regarded with a degree of trepidation in Draj. The House of the Mind may lie in ruins, but Atzetuk's templars seem to apprehend a disproportionate number of psionic residents during their cullings.

**Character Names:** Many Draji names have an Mayan or Aztec sound to them. Common names include: Abkinzo, Hulnebak, Chaam, Chibirak, Aurukan, Kulitay, Tlacezet, Xodat, Xiutal, Mazatal, Ollin, Tetlak, Quataal.

## Notable Draji

Kuliak Talecatcher is a druid devoted to thwarting Atzetuk's larger plans—but he doesn't know exactly what they are. He poses as a freeman weaver in Draj's Dye District, but he also runs an underground cell that sabotages the templars' efforts wherever possible and tries to figure out the meaning behind Atzetuk's many sacrifices. Kuliak can be a useful patron for revolution-minded PCs, and he sometimes rescues victims from the sacrificial altar if they'll be useful to the nascent rebellion.

**Kuliak, Half-elf Drd9**: CR 9; Medium humanoid (half-elf); HD 9d8+18; hp 58; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1/18–20, +1 *blood obsidian scimitar*); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6+1/18–20, +1 *blood obsidian scimitar*); SA wild shape 4/day; SQ nature sense, resist nature's lure, trackless step, venom immunity, wild empathy +9, woodland stride; AL NG; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Bluff +6, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +6 (+8 acting), Gather Information +2, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (nature) +14, Listen +5, Search +3, Spellcraft +14, Spot +5, Survival +16 (+18 above ground).

*Feats:* Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Natural Spell, Track.

*Languages:* Common, Aarakocran, Druidic, Pterran.

*Spells Prepared* (6/5/5/4/3/1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*create water, cure minor wounds, detect magic* (2), *light, resistance*; 1st—*cure light wounds, longstrider, magic fang, speak with animals* (2); 2nd—*animal messenger, barkskin, cure moderate wounds, reduce animal, warp wood*; 3rd—*call lightning, dominate animal, greater magic fang, poison*; 4th—*cure serious wounds, dispel magic, scrying*; 5th—*wall of fire*.

*Powers Known (*6 PP; save DC 10 + power level*)*: 1st—*psionic charm*; 2nd—*danger sense*.

*Possessions: +1 hide armor, +1 blood obsidian scimitar, periapt of wisdom +2, hat of disguise, druid's vestment*. Animal companion is an 8-HD boneclaw baazrag (p. 84).

## Draj Encounters

At some point during their time in Draj, characters are likely to see templars taking away citizens or slaves to be sacrificed to the greater glory of Atzetuk. These "cullings" occur on a daily basis.

*EL 5*: This team of templars is assigned to cull someone specific, and they're empowered to make an arrest at spear-point if necessary. Targets of cullings often flee, and these three templars know that they may be in for a chase. Their gear is their treasure.

**Draji Culler, Human Clr2 (3)**: CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+3, masterwork iron morningstar); SA psionics, spells, rebuke undead; SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 17, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Concentration +6, Knowledge (religion) +4.

*Feat:* Combat Casting, Power Attack.

*Languages*: Common.

*Spells Prepared* (4/3+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic* (2), *guidance*; 1st—*divine favor, endure elements*, magic weapon, shield of faith*.

*Domain Spell; *Domains*: Destruction (smite 1/day, +4 on attack, extra 2 damage), Sun (greater turning against undead 1/day).

*Powers Known* (3 PP; save DC 10 + power level): 1st—*empathy*.

*Possessions:* Spiked bronze breastplate, heavy wooden shield, masterwork iron morningstar.

## Draj Adventures

Draj is a good place to connect the PCs with an organized resistance movement—whether as patron, ally, or foe.

- An agent of House Tsalaxa hires the characters to take a sealed message from Urik to Draj with great haste. The message contains instructions for establishing contact between two cells of the Draji resistance.
- The characters obtain one half of a powerful psionic item—perhaps an artifact. But sages tell them the other half is somewhere within the ruins of Draj's House of the Mind.

- The characters learn the reason behind Atzetuk's ritual sacrifices, and they have one month to disrupt the powerful energies he's gathering.

## Nibenay

Known as the City of Shadows, Nibenay is among the more powerful city-states. Its dragon-king, also named Nibenay, rules from a palace shaped like a massive bust of the Shadow King himself.

**Demographics:** Nibenay was the city-state where the elan first appeared almost 300 years ago. While they've since spread across Athas, the elan make up 10% of Nibenay's population (reduce the percentage of humans by 10% to compensate).

**Lands:** Nibenay sits at the northern edge of the Crescent Forest, the only forest of any size in the Tablelands. To the south lies a vast salt flat known as the Great Ivory Plain. Windbreak Mountain to the north provides a measure of protection from duststorms, and it's the tallest mountain in the Tablelands so caravans often use it as a navigational landmark.

**Settlements:** Each city district in Nibenay has walls that divide it from its neighbors, and templars stand at each gate, querying everyone who passes, noble and slave alike, about their business. Visitors who satisfy the templars' curiosity can move about the city freely, except into the Naggaramakam, a walled district open only to templars in the service of the Shadow King. The districts' high walls block the view of the most unusual dragon-king palace: a bust of Nibenay himself, hundreds of feet high. High-level templars summoned to consult with Nibenay take a steep set of stairs into the mouth of the great statue, then into a maze of corridors and chambers within the bust of the dragon-king.

Beyond the Naggaramakam, Nibenese city planning is more haphazard than in the other city-states, and roads often diverge at odd angles or dead-ends without warning. Many travelers tell tales of getting turned around in Nibenay, hopelessly lost for hours.

Unlike most cities, Nibenay has a surplus of water, including a shallow reservoir just inside the city walls. Wells in the city rarely run dry, and in the last century the city weathered a yearlong siege from Urik until Hamanu's army ran out of water and departed.

Nibenay also controls Fort Isus and Fort Sandol to the north, the first line of defense if Urik attacks again. It also has Fort Inix to the east (used mostly to suppress the elf tribes in the Great Ivory Plain) and Fort Fyra, which guards against monsters from the ruined city of Bodach and incursions from maenad mercenaries out of Balic.

**Power Groups:** While the templars control the day-to-day affairs of the city-state, the dragon-king's closest advisers are enslaved scholars, not templars. Agents of Nibenay lurk in many academies and colleges across Athas, ready to kidnap or otherwise control sages who possess knowledge that the Shadow King wants. Nibenay spirits them away to Naggaramakam, where they spend the rest of their lives doing research on the dragon-king's behalf. Nibenay has been enslaving the brightest minds on Athas for centuries, so the library within his palace must have extraordinary knowledge in its books, maps, and scrolls.

Among the disaffected nobles of the city-state are those secretly working to overthrow the dragon-king. But two other factions threaten Nibenay from the shadows. The city-state of Gulg has spies everywhere in Nibenay—just as Nibenay has them in Gulg. The Forest Queen of Gulg rarely resorts to direct actions like sabotage or assassination, but little escapes her notice. If Nibenay trains a new legion for its army or begins construction of a soulknife training academy, agents of Gulg are quick to find out about it.

Another force stalks Nibenay: a powerful defiler wizard named Sharabdos, who wants to overthrow the Shadow King and take his place, becoming a dragon-king himself. Nibenay knows he has a rival somewhere in the city, because Sharabdos sometimes defiles nearby sections of the Crescent Forest with his magic. But so far Nibenay's divinations and psychic investigations have failed to catch Sharabdos himself. Sharabdos knows he's not strong enough to conquer Nibenay yet, but he's watching events closely and striking at Nibenay's power structure when he can.

A third faction wields some influence in Nibenay: the elan. The race first emerged from hidden creches near Nibenay about three centuries ago, when the leadership of a psionic secret society known as The Order was wiped out. The Order splintered into dozens of factions, one of which released their most promising research project, the elan race. Over 300 years the elan have spread across Athas, but many consider Nibenay their ancestral home. Some of Athas's most powerful psions are elans living lives of quiet contemplation in Nibenay.

**Beliefs:** Nibenay has installed himself as the head of a state religion, but he doesn't mandate participation (like Atzetuk of Draj) or have widespread popular support (like Lalali-Puy of Gulg). The templars charged with running the city are called "Shadow Consorts," and they're all female. The only male templars dedicated to Nibenay serve in the city-state's military and rarely step inside the city walls.

**Commerce:** Nibenay's main export is agafari wood from the trees of the Crescent Forest. While some of the city's nobles have farms near the city itself, others have hereditary title to log a certain number of trees from the forest. But the slaves who do the logging are in great danger, both from the monsters in the forest and from Gulg's headhunter patrols. (Gulg claims the Crescent Forest as part of its territory.)

The standard gear prices apply in Nibenay, except that it does a thriving business in scrolls, books, and other reference materials. Characters selling ancient lore of some sort get 75% of its value in Nibenay, as opposed to 50% elsewhere. Characters buying such items (including cleric scrolls, maps, and psionic power stones) find them 10% cheaper in Nibenay than they would be elsewhere.

**Language:** A Nibenese accent sounds refined to speakers of Common elsewhere on Athas, and sometimes speakers not from Nibenay will affect the long vowels and slow cadence of the Nibenese dialect in order to sound more distinguished.

**Arts and Crafts:** The art of woodcarving is particularly esteemed in Nibenay, where the dark wood of the agafari tree is used for everything from weapons to small statues of Nibenay himself. Typical treasures from Nibenay include foot-tall statuettes (1d10 × 10 cp), finely carved water goblets (1d6 × 100 gp), and well-tuned xylophones (3d6 × 100 gp).

**Entertainment:** Dancers are particularly common in Nibenay because they're a favorite entertainment of the Shadow King himself. Nibenay often invites accomplished dancers to perform at the front of his procession when he tours the city that bears his name.

Gladiator battles are as popular in Nibenay as elsewhere on Athas. Particularly compelling are the many psionic battles and "man vs. monster" fights, which Nibenese arenas showcase frequently.

## Nibenay Characters

Nibenay is a more mysterious place than many of the other city-states. Its many colleges and academies make it a good place for wizard and psion characters to hail from. It's also the original home of the elan, although not all still live in Nibenay.

**Adventuring Nibenese:** Adventurers from Nibenay are more likely than most to have some sort of formal training before taking up the wandering life of an adventurer. By the decree of Nibenay, every child in the city-state, citizen and slave alike, is tested by the templars for aptitude in a number of different fields. Children with average test results continue under their family's guidance. But those with particularly good or bad scores can be sent to a prestigious academy, given templar training before becoming a Shadow Consort, or (for particularly bad scores) be drafted as a shock trooper in the Nibenese army.

While most PCs got the specialized training the Shadow King provided, others might bear grudges because they didn't get into a prestigious military school or psionic academy. Such characters are proud to be self-taught, and some relish the notion of proving their superiority to their counterparts who got special training from Nibenay.

Nibenay is reasonably welcoming to travelers—and because it's in the center of the Tablelands, it gets a lot of visitors. Only those from Gulg draw the hostility of the Nibenese. Even travelers from Urik, an enemy city-state just a few decades ago, aren't treated as badly as visitors from Gulg.

**Character Development:** Characters of a scholarly bent, as well as those multiclassing into a scholarly class, will find Nibenay a place that values learning. PCs with particularly esoteric lore may be asked to teach what they know. Their would-be students might be well-heeled nobles willing to pay, or they might be templars that won't take "no" for an answer.

Among performers, Perform (dance) can be the ticket to a better life in Nibenay. Many ranks in a Knowledge skill can earn you a better life of sorts as well. But the adventuring opportunities for the slave-scholars of the Shadow King are slim indeed.

**Character Names:** Many Nibenese names have a Babylonian sound to them. Common names include Merodach, Eshar-Haddan, Shamashum, Urkini, Kandalu, Sin-Ishkun, Lassar, Nabukal, Buchad, Nazur, Amel, Markud.

## Notable Nibenese

Shaorach is one of Nibenay's most prized scholar-slaves. A cleric of Air, she provides the Shadow King with guidance on matters relating to the Inner Planes, where she's traveled extensively. She's been psionically dominated so thoroughly that she willingly serves Nibenay. But she has brief moments of lucidity where she remembers the joy of gliding on a thermal far above the surface of Athas. In those moments, she'd do anything for the chance to be free again

**Shaorach, Aarakocra Clr14**: CR 14; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 14d8+14; hp 77; Init +8; Spd 20 ft., fly 90 ft. (average); AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +10; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d4–1, talon) or +16 ranged (1d8+1/×3, *+1 longbow*); Full Atk +9 melee (1d4–1, 2 talons) and +4 melee (1d3–1, bite) or +16/+11 ranged (1d8+1/×3, *+1 longbow*); SA psionics, spells, turn undead; SQ aarakocra traits; AL LN; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +15; Str 8, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 22, Cha 8.

*Skills:* Concentration +18, Craft (bowmaking) +4, Knowledge (nature) +6, Knowledge (religion) +10, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +8, Spellcraft +10, Spot +8.

*Feats:* Dodge, Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longbow)$^{B}$, Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Shot on the Run, Weapon Focus (longbow)$^{B}$.

*Languages*: Common, Aarakocran, Auran.

*Spells Prepared* (6/7+1/7+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; save DC 16 + spell level): 0—*detect magic* (2), *detect poison, light, resistance, virtue*; 1st—*bless, comprehend languages, deathwatch, detect chaos, divine favor, endure elements, obscuring mist**, *sanctuary*; 2nd—*aid, bear's endurance, hold person, remove paralysis, lesser restoration, shatter, spiritual weapon, wind wall**; 3rd—*create food and water, dispel magic, gaseous form**, *invisibility purge, magic vestment, protection from energy*; 4th—*dismissal, divination, divine power**, *restoration, sending, summon monster IV*; 5th—*commune, control winds**, *plane shift, raise dead, true seeing*; 6th—*chain lightning**, *greater dispel magic, find the path, heal, summon monster VI*; 7th—*control weather**, *ethereal jaunt, summon monster VII*.

*Domain Spell; *Domains*: Air (turn earth creatures or rebuke earth creatures 2/day), War (proficiency and Weapon Focus with longbow).

*Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—elfsight.*

*Possessions: +1 studded leather, +1 longbow,* 20 iron arrows, *periapt of Wisdom +4, strand of prayer beads.*

## Nibenay Encounters

Nibenay is a more open cosmopolitan city-state than most, giving PCs who visit there a wide variety of encounter possibilities.

*EL 6:* These two guards are typical of the templars who quiz those who pass from one of Nibenay's districts to another.

**Gate Templar, Human Clr2/Psi2 (telepath) (2)**: CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d8+2d4–4; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (2d4+1/18–20, masterwork iron falchion); SA psionics, spells, rebuke undead; SQ —; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 13.

*Skills:* Bluff +6, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Intimidate +6, Knowledge (religion) +8, Listen +6, Psicraft +9, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +8, Spot +6.

*Feats:* Alertness, Combat Casting, Inquisitor, Martial Weapon Proficiency (falchion), Psionic Endowment, Weapon Focus (falchion).

*Languages:* Common, Dwarven, Elven, Maenadi.

*Spells Prepared* (4/3+1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, detect poison, light, virtue*; 1st—*command, magic weapon*, sanctuary, shield of faith.*

*Domain Spell. *Domains*: Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills), War (proficiency and Weapon Focus with falchion).

*Powers Known (*12 PP; save DC 13 + power level*): 1st—crystal shard, detect psionics, empathy, mindlink, psionic daze, telempathic projection.*

*Possessions:* Chitin armor, masterwork iron falchion, *dorje of energy stun* (20 charges), *crawling tattoo of dispel psionics.*

## Nibenay Adventures

Nibenay is in the middle of the map both geographically and politically. Just as Nibenay the city-state is beset on all sides by rivals, so too is Nibenay the dragon-king facing threats from Lalali-Puy, from Sharabdos, and from homegrown rebels. Adventures in Nibenay will quickly ensnare PCs in the machinations of those forces seeking control of Nibenay.

- The characters are hired by a merchant house to rescue their master cartographer, who's been captured by agents of the Shadow King and is even now en route to a life as a scholar-slave in Nibenay.
- An errant *teleport* puts the PCs in the middle of the Crescent Forest, where they'll have to contend with Nibenese army units keeping the forest clear for the slave-loggers and Gulg headhunters killing any interlopers they find.
- Nibenay wants to draw out Sharabdos and deal with him once and for all. He manipulates events so that the PCs serve as bait for the would-be dragon-king.

## Gulg

Gulg is perhaps the strangest of the city-states, a city built from living wood and vine where an evil Forest Goddess rules with the enthusiastic approval of her subjects. And Lalali-Puy, the *oba* of Gulg, has a fail-safe for any rival who would seek to unseat her: in a crisis she can defile her own forest-city, drawing on the Tablelands' largest concentration of plant life.

**Demographics:** Gulg has demographics typical for a city-state, except that 2% of the population are halfling exiles from the Forest Ridge (reduce dwarf and mul populations by 1% each to compensate).

**Lands:** Gulg lies at the southern end of the Crescent Forest—a forest it periodically goes to war with Nibenay over. To the southeast is a salty flat known as the Great Ivory Plain, and to the west are stony barrens that stretch nearly to Tyr and the foothills of the Jagged Cliffs.

**Settlements:** Gulg is a city fashioned almost entirely from living wood shaped by the dragon-queen and her templars. The barrier that surrounds the city, the Mopti Wall, is a thick, thorny mass up to 30 feet high in places.

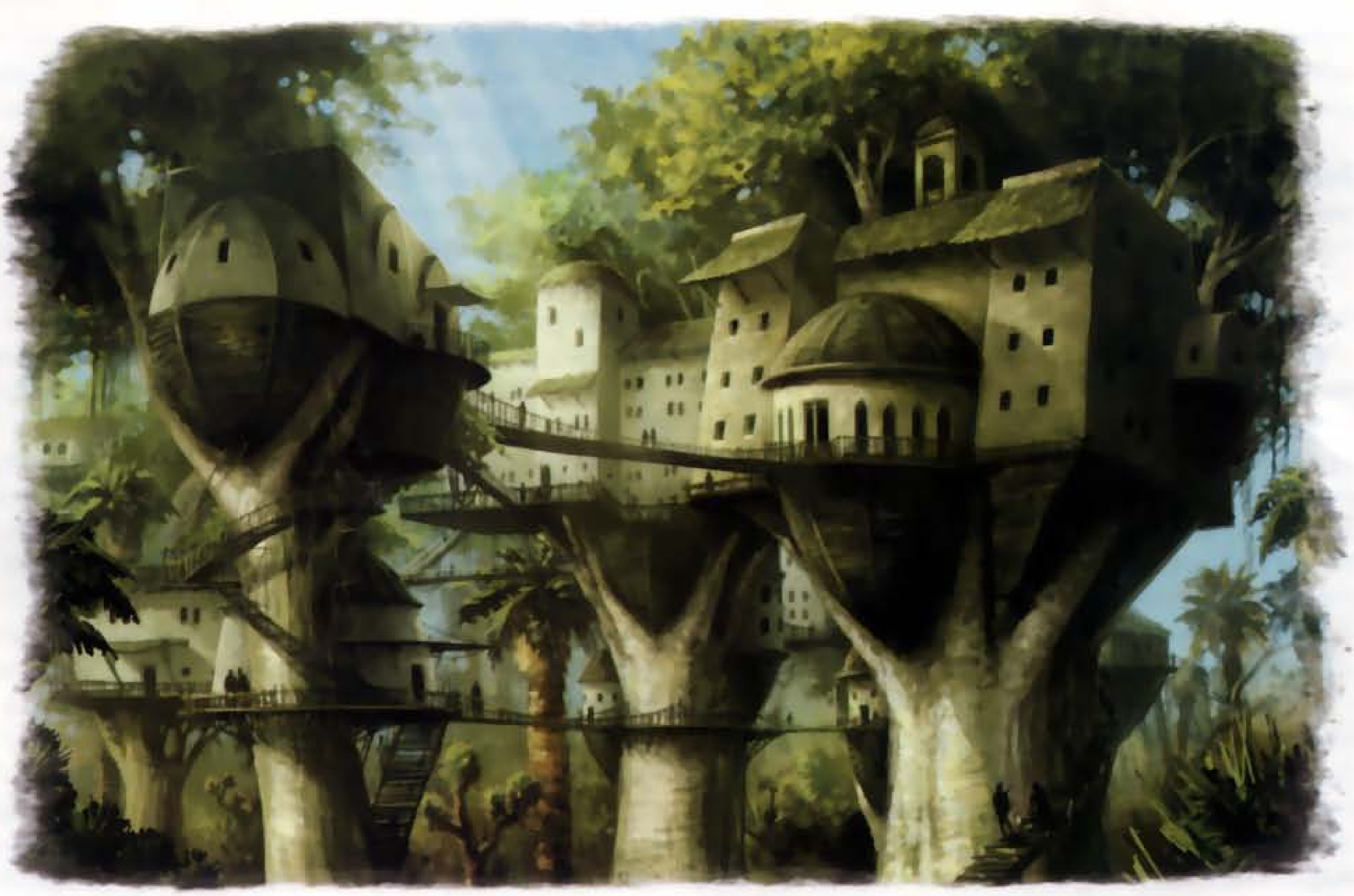
Gulg has no paved roads, only forest paths and trails winding their way through the massive agafari trees. In treetop structures called *dagadas* live the city's residents, with greater altitude indicating greater social status. Only the Foreigners' Quarter has traditional stone buildings. Lalali-Puy herself rules from the tallest tree, in an elaborate tree-mansion known as Sunlight Home.

Unlike the other city-states, Gulg rigidly controls the movement of visitors. Only citizens of Gulg and some members of House Iniki can walk from district to district; outsiders must remain in the Foreigners' Quarter.

Gulg also controls Fort Kalvis to the southwest and and Fort Harbeth to the south. Kalvis guards Gulg's traditional farms, while Harbeth watches for incursions from the dwarf-clans of Ledopolus and maenad armies from Balic.

**Power Groups:** The dragon-queen Lalali-Puy and her templars have almost absolute control over Gulg. Most denizens of the city realize that life in Gulg is better than the rest of Athas and thank the Forest Goddess for her guidance and protection. The resistance on Gulg is almost nonexistent, consisting mostly of Nibenese agents and druids sent to keep an eye on the machinations of the *oba*.

But different Gulgan factions vie for the favor of Lalali-Puy, each hoping to be the primary instrument of her will. A missionary cadre of templars known as the Seeds of the *Oba* contends that the best way to spread Gulgan influence is to travel far and wide seeking converts to the *oba*'s cause. Lalali-Puy's generals, on the other hand, are agitating for a new crusade that will claim lands for the *oba* at the point of a spear. And House Iniki, Gulg's dominant merchant house, wants to use economic superiority to bring communities under Lalali-Puy's control. While the three factions don't actively thwart



each other's plans, they don't cooperate very well. It's common for a templar, a general, and a trade factor to argue vehemently about how best to do the *oba*'s will—an argument that ends only when an obvious threat to Gulg emerges.

**Beliefs:** The dragon-queen has established a state religion, but (unlike the religions developed by the other dragon-kings) hers is a widely practiced faith. Most Gulgans willingly worship Lalali-Puy as a goddess, praying for the day when she restores Athas to fertility and prosperity. Resistance to Lalali-Puy's rule is almost nonexistent within the thorny walls of Gulg.

After the upheaval of three centuries ago, Lalali-Puy took a more active role as head of her religion, declaring a "great crusade" to spread the word of the Forest Goddess throughout Athas. Wherever trees grew, she said, the *oba* would rule, until eventually all of Athas would be a vast forest under her control. Lalali-Puy's great crusade resulted in her armies marching simultaneously on on Nibenay and Tyr, but ultimately failing to capture either city. Gulg's armies have since retreated, although her templars have begun to speak of a "second crusade" to claim more of Athas for the Forest Goddess. But one of the lasting effects of Lalali-Puy's crusade is that word reached the halfling communities of her reverence for forest life. The halfling elders realized that no dragon-queen would ever truly have the interest of a forest at heart, but a minority among the halflings were swayed by the words of her missionary templars and came to live in Gulg. Today, any halfling exiled from the tribes of the Forest knows she can find a welcoming halfling community in Gulg if she can travel there safely.

**Commerce:** Gulg exports kola nuts, a wide variety of spices, and silk garments to the rest of Athas, selling most of it through House Iniki.

Metal weapons, on the other hand, are harder to find here than elsewhere, costing 10% more than they otherwise would.

**Language:** Residents of Gulg are likely to punctuate their sentences with gestures, ranging from clenched fists (indicating anger) to loud clapping (indicating excitement or approval). In effect, the Gulgans have a simple sign language with a few dozen signs that augments their use of Common. The gestures cover simple, common concepts, so it's not hard for outsiders to figure out that a cupped hand means "more" or that crossed arms means "done."

**Arts and Crafts:** Gulgan artisans work in wood much as their Nibenese counterparts do, but because the *oba* doesn't permit logging of the Crescent Forest, they don't have much raw material to work with. Some gulgan plantations around the city raise the silkworms that create raw silk. Slaves weave fine silk garments that House Iniki then sells across Athas.

Another item from Gulg that's available across Athas are hanuni trees. These miniscule trees are about a foot tall and grow within a ceramic pot if given even a little water. Many domiciles throughout Athas keep a hanuni tree as a talisman of luck and prosperity.

**Entertainment:** Gulgans enjoy many of the same entertainments as residents of other city-states, but Gulg doesn't have the large amphitheatres and arenas that other places do. Instead, each neighborhood has smaller meeting places where gladiatoral matches and musical performances take place.

The musical arts are of particular interest in Gulg, where many fine musical instruments from flutes to ouds and drums are made. It is said that a particular chamber in the Forest Goddess' palace is so acoustically perfect that a note played there can be heard minutes later. Occasionally a performer of great skill will get an invitation to play for Lalali-Puy herself. Such invitations are the highest honor a Gulgan musician can receive, but they also mark the end of a career. Those who play for Lalali-Puy are never heard from again, and the Forest Goddess' templars remain silent as to their fate.

## Gulgan Characters

Characters with both a connection to nature and a sense of city life often come from Gulg. PCs from Gulg often retain a degree of loyalty to their dragon-queen. She may be evil, but she's far more palatable than many of her dragon-king counterparts.

**Adventuring Gulgans:** Some Gulgans explore Athas with an eye toward bringing the power of the Forest Goddess there eventually, telling others how eventually a carpet of green forest will cover the Tablelands again.

Other PCs from Gulg are more pragmatic and even disillusioned. Once they've left the relative safety of Gulg's thorny walls, they realize that no forest can ever encompass Athas—the world is too ruined for the Forest Goddess' vision to become reality. And some PCs see a more sinister reason why a dragon-queen—surely a powerful defiler—wants to grow immense forests around her city.

Gulg's residents tend to treat visitors poorly. Even the more diplomatic Gulgans sometimes let slip a sense of Gulg's superiority, while the less polite prosletyze on behalf of the Forest Goddess or simply shun those who don't venerate the *oba*.

**Character Development:** Skills such as Knowledge (nature) and Survival are more important to Gulgans than to denizens of the other city-states. Few slaves work farms near Gulg, but many are trained to gather berries, nuts, and spices from the Crescent Forest.

**Character Names:** Many residents of Gulg have names reminiscent of North African names. Common names include Akir, Harath, Tarabi, Tabil, Naeam, Zaed, Reyaka, Takriyt, Majiid, Thaliq, Niza, Gauram.

## Notable Gulgans

Hathali is a merchant of House Iniki specializing in small spice and kola-nut caravans. She often hires locals to help guard her caravans; she's a competent caravan-master, but she tries to convert those in her employ to the worship of Lalali-Puy.

✦ **Hathali, Human Rog7**: CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d6; hp 24; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk/Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork iron rapier) or +8 ranged (1d6/×3, shortbow); SA sneak attack +4d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 19.

*Skills:* Appraise +10, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Forgery +10, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (geography) +5, Listen +11, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11, Survival +6 (+8 avoiding hazards).

*Feats:* Dodge, Mobility, Speed of Thought, Weapon Finesse.

*Languages*: Common.

*Powers Known (*6 PP; save DC 13 + power level*):* 1st—*detect psionics, know direction and location.*

*Possessions: +1 studded leather,* masterwork composite shortbow, 20 iron arrows, masterwork iron rapier, *cloak of charisma +2, potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of glibness.*

## Gulg Encounters

Most encounters in Gulg are with loyal subjects of Lalali-Puy—or other visitors within the foreigners' quarter.

*EL 7:* Among the more notable units in Gulg's army are the head hunters, groups of rangers dedicated to Lalali-Puy. This group of four head hunters patrols the Crescent Forest, beheading the interlopers they find. Their gear is their treasure.

✦ **Head Hunter, Human Rgr3 (4)**: CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4/19–20, masterwork blood obsidian longsword) or +8 ranged (1d8+3/×3, composite longbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword) or +8 ranged (1d8+3/×3, composite longbow) or +6/+6 ranged (1d8+3/×3, composite longbow); SA archery combat style, favored enemy (human) +2; SQ wild empathy +2; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills:* Hide +9, Knowledge (geography) +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +6, Spot +7, Survival +7 (+9 following tracks or avoiding hazards).

*Feats:* Endurance$^B$, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot$^B$, Track$^B$, Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Weapon Focus (longsword).

*Languages:* Common.

*Possessions:* Masterwork composite (+3) longbow, 20 iron arrows, masterwork blood obsidian longsword, masterwork studded leather, buckler, *potion of invisibility.*

## Gulg Adventures

Adventures in Gulg almost always mean contact with the agents of Lalali-Puy, whether as patrons, allies, or foes.

- A group of missionary templars from Gulg have been imprisoned in Tyr for too-aggressive proslytizing. Some of

Lalali-Puy's templars hire the PCs to secure their release any way they can.

- The low-intensity skirmishes in the Crescent Forest between Nibenese and Gulgan forces degenerate into open warfare—when the PCs happen to be in the middle of the forest.
- A group of druids have approached Lalali-Puy with offers of alliance, seeking to help her reforest Athas. Other druids are aghast at the very notion of allying with a defiling dragon-queen and ask the PCs to break up the alliance.

## Balic

Balic was one of the weakest city-states on Athas until a century ago, when the dragon-king Andropinis returned from extraplanar imprisonment at the head of an army of strange humanoids called maenads. Since he reconquered Balic, Andropinis has embarked on ambitious construction and military plans, intending to restore the city-state to its former glory.

**Demographics:** Fully 20 percent of Balic's population are maenads brought to Athas by Andropinis. Some 70 percent are human, 5 percent mul, 2 percent dwarf, 2 percent half-elf, and 1 percent other races.

**Lands:** Balic is set apart from the other six city states on a promontory jutting out into an arm of the Sea of Silt called the Estuary of the Forked Tongue. Balic sits at the point where the estuary forks northward toward the dwarven cities of Ledopolus and due west toward the runes of the city-state of Kalidnay.

Due to its proximity to the Great Cerulean Storm, Balic is buffeted by Tyr-storms on a regular basis. Elsewhere, Athasians would be glad to receive Balic's periodic rainfall, but the Tyr-storms strike with such high winds and heavy precipitation that crops are as likely to be ruined as nourished by the storms.

**Settlements:** Balic is unique among Athasian city-states because it has a primitive harbor and port. While Athas has no oceans, massive wheeled ships called silt sailers can navigate the Sea of Silt. Balic's merchant houses provide a lifeline to communities on the edge of the Sea of Silt such as Samarah, Alfala, and Last Port. These settlements are completely under Andropinis's thumb. While Balic once had forts guarding the land approaches to the city, they were sacked during the disorder that followed Andropinis's disappearance, and the dragon-king hasn't rebuilt them yet.

Andropinis has focused his attention on rebuilding the alabaster towers that once crowded the Balician sky. When Andropinis returned from imprisonment in the Black, he found half of Balic in ruins. Andropinis swept the Trade Lords from power, enslaving many of them and putting them to work rebuilding Balic just as it was 300 years ago.

**Power Groups:** Rajaat, the creator of the first sorcerer-kings, imprisoned Andropinis on a demiplane within the Black 300 years ago during the same struggle that killed Tectuktitlay and Abalach-Re. But Andropinis still had the immense power of a dragon-king, so he found a circuitous escape route through a series of demiplanes, each stranger and more menacing than the last. On one such plane he found the maenads, a race of people likewise trapped within the Black. Andropinis created a ritual that brought himself and the maenads back to Athas during the 193rd King's Age. Grateful for his help, the maenad clans pledged their fealty to Andropinis. Andropinis's army to this day is more than half maenad, and even some of his templars are maenads.

Two merchant houses, House Tomblador and House Rees, have headquarters in Balic, but neither is particularly strong because Andropinis intentionally harasses the merchant houses. Andropinis used his maenad army to recapture Balic from the self-styled "Trade Lords," formerly members of the Wavir merchant house who seized control of the city rather than let it fall into disorder and ruin. The dragon-king utterly destroyed House Wavir, but he still doesn't trust merchants.

While Andropinis rules Balic with an iron fist, his reach is far from absolute. Descendants of House Wavir and the Trade Lords still plot in secret, dreaming of a return to power. And many of the maenad clans are growing dissatisfied with Andropinis's rule. The better lives Andropinis promised them have evaporated in the hot sun of Athas, and the dragon-king seems far more interested in his former subjects than he is in the maenads who sacrificed so much to free him from the Black.

**Beliefs:** Before his imprisonment, Andropinis cloaked himself in the trappings of democracy, claiming to be a dragon-king freely elected to his position. Templars had 10-year terms of office, and high-ranking templars had to have their positions confirmed by the Chamber of Free Citizens and the Chamber of Patricians. But since his return, Andropinis has made no move to reestablish democratic reforms. At first, free citizens demonstrated for elections and reestablishment of the Chambers. But after legions of maenads dispersed several demonstrations, the residents of Balic realized that Andropinis was not about to share power.

Today, the residents of Balic and the maenads encamped beyond the city walls are unsure what Andropinis's plans are. Andropinis seems to be concentrating on rebuilding, but he makes few decrees or pronouncements.

**Commerce:** Balic is in a relatively fertile spot, with silty soil ideal for growing the gorvath berries used in dark wine and other liquors. Balic also controls a number of small mines set into the rocky outcroppings that emerge like towers from the Silt Sea.

Prices in Balic follow the D&D standard, with the exception of labor prices. Both skilled and manual laborers fetch a price 20% higher than normal, whether that price is expressed in wages (for freemen) or an actual price (for slaves). The lone exception to the labor shortage is soldiers, which Balic has in abundance due to the maenads. Many maenad clans and

other Balician groups have formed mercenary companies that work for whatever city-state or merchant house will pay them. So far Andropinis has turned a blind eye to the private armies based in and around his city-state.

**Language:** The Balician dialect has Maenadi words sprinkled throughout it—another reflection of how some maenads are assimilating into Athasian society. And roughly one-fifth of Balic's nonmaenad population speaks Maenadi as a second language.

**Arts and Crafts:** Most of Balic's artisans have been hired, drafted, or enslaved to work on dozens of public works projects in various stages throughout the city. Accordingly, there's no strong theme to Balician arts and crafts. Items made of alabaster often come from Balic, as do many expensive liquors. Typical treasures from Balic include alabaster armbands (1d6 × 100 cp), vintage darkwine (2d6 × 100 cp), and alabaster-and-gold necklaces (3d6 × 100 cp).

**Entertainment:** Balic is the only city-state with organized theatres, where troupes of actors play out ribald comedies and melodramatic tragedies. Templars are present to ensure that dramas don't contain subversive elements.

Balic also has some of the bloodiest gladiator arenas in the Tablelands, owing to the surplus of former soldiers in the area. The maenads in particular have taken to the Athasian gladiator sports with relish, throwing themselves into battle with abandon.

## Balic Characters

Many maenad PCs are from Balic. It's also a good choice for any PC who wants to be from someplace exotic and far-off. The other six city-states have less commerce with Balic simply because it's so far away.

**Adventuring Balicians:** Wanderlust motivates many maenad PCs from Balic; as relatively recent arrivals to this new world, some maenads are eager to explore it.

Other PCs might take to the adventurer's life out of frustration. Maenads in particular are frustrated with Andropinis's obsession with rebuilding Balic. When they left imprisonment in the Black, they thought they'd be the vanguard of a conquering army in a new world teeming with life. Instead they find themselves encamped in the desert season after season while their ostensible savior builds temples in his own name and coddles the native residents of Balic.

When confronted with a traveler, Balicians tend to be reserved but polite. They also tend to be unimpressed with visitors displaying martial prowess, because skilled warriors are plentiful in and around the city-state.

**Character Development:** Whatever their class, PCs in Balic will find that they aren't the only ones seeking to master their abilities. Among Andropinis's first priorities was the reestablishment of the Cerebran, an excellent psionic university. He also built the Shrine of the Reconquest, an academy that trains would-be psychic warriors in the mental and physical combat styles of the maenads.

**Character Names:** Many Balician names sound somewhat Egyptian or Greek. Common names include Namarar, Menei, Fortari, Rauses, Murkatal, Neferet, Khasek, Djetu, Akenun, Mutesankh, Meryneith, Hebreni.

## Notable Balicians

Simiath is the captain of the *Fortunate Wind*, a silt sailer that makes trade runs up and down the Estuary of the Forked Tongue. If the price is right (or the lure of treasure is compelling enough) he'll sail far out into the uncharted islands of the Silt Sea, where both ruined cities and terrible monsters await.

**Simiath, Dwarf Rog6/Wil3**: CR 9; Medium humanoid (dwarf); HD 9d6+9; hp 40; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/19–20, masterwork blood obsidian shortsword) or +10 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, *+1 hand crossbow*); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d6+1/19–20, masterwork blood obsidian shortsword) or +10/+5 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, *+1 hand crossbow*) or +8/+8/+3 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, *+1 hand crossbow*); SA sneak attack +3d6, wild surge +2; SQ dwarf traits, elude touch, evasion, psychic enervation, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL CG; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 13.

*Skills:* Balance +17, Climb +12, Escape Artist +3 (+5 with ropes), Jump +5, Listen +11, Profession (silt sailor) +14, Spot +14, Survival +11, Tumble +17, Use Rope +12.

*Feats:* Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Reload (hand crossbow), Rapid Shot.

*Languages*: Common, Dwarven, Terran.

*Powers Known (15 PP; save DC 11 + power level): 1st—force screen, know direction and location, vigor.*

*Possessions: +1 floating studded leather,* masterwork blood obsidian short sword, *+1 hand crossbow,* 10 iron crossbow bolts, *glove of storing.*

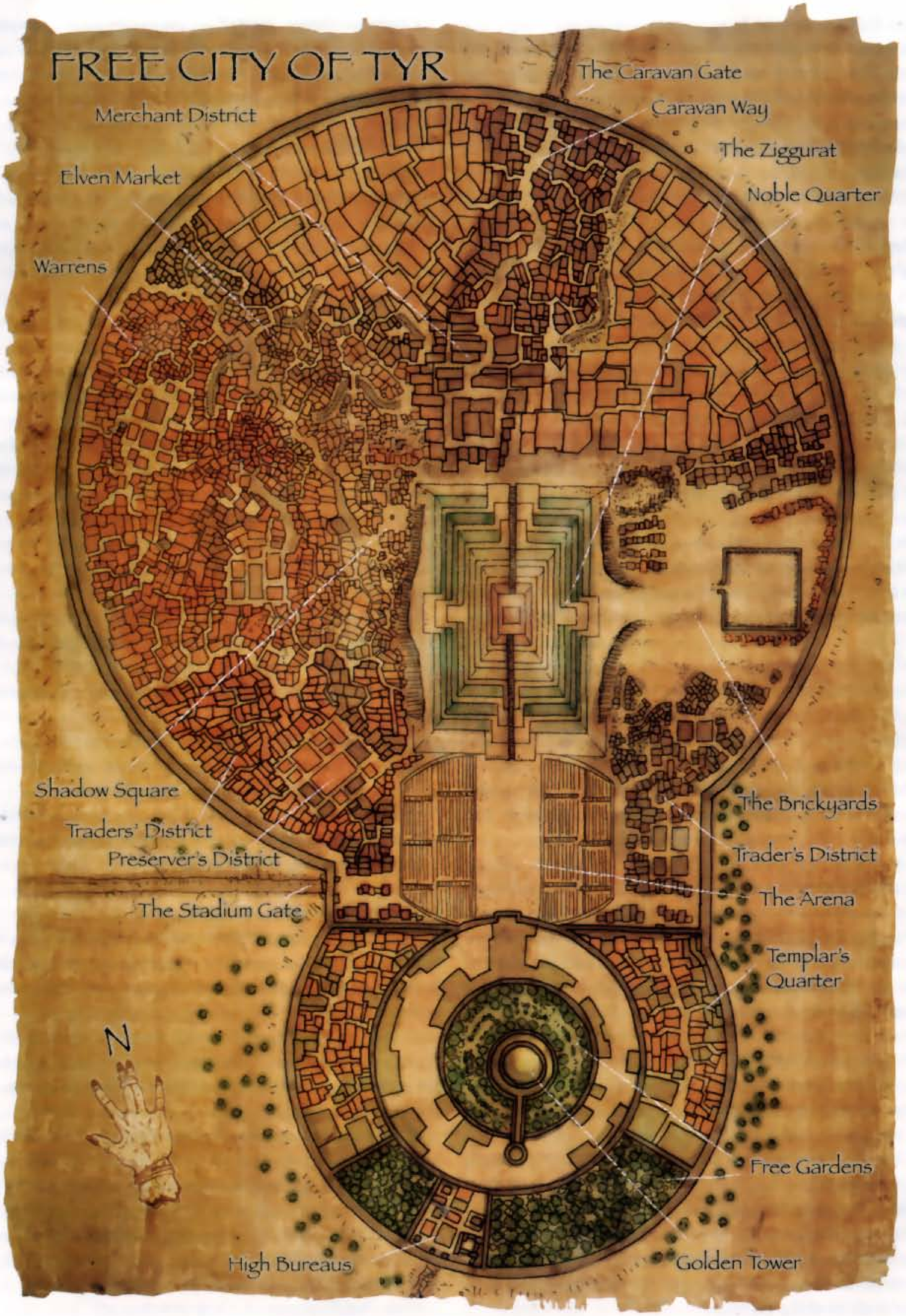
## Balic Encounters

Balic is a good place to introduce the maenads to PCs who haven't encountered them yet. It's impossible to reach Balic by land without seeing several great encampments of maenad legions.

*EL 8:* These five maenad psychic warriors patrol the city at Andropinis's request. They aren't templars and don't have law enforcement authority, but they'll act quickly to stop any obvious lawbreakers.

**Maenad Legionnaire, Maenad Psy3 (5)**: CR 3; Medium humanoid (maenad); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +6 melee (2d6+4/19–20, masterwork iron greatsword) or +3 ranged (1d8+3/×3, composite longbow); SA outburst, psionics, psi-like ability; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Autohypnosis +8, Concentration +7.


FREE CITY OF TYR
The Caravan Gate
Merchant District
Caravan Way
The Ziggurat
Elven Market
Noble Quarter
Warrens
Shadow Square
The Brickyards
Traders' District
Preserver's District
Trader's District
The Arena
The Stadium Gate
Templar's Quarter
N
Free Gardens
High Bureaus
Golden Tower

*Feats:* Point Blank Shot, Psionic Shot, Psionic Weapon, Speed of Thought.

*Languages:* Common, Maenadi.

*Powers Known (*8 PP; save DC 12 + power level*):* 1st—*biofeedback, force screen, metaphysical weapon.*

*Psi-Like Ability:* 1/day—*energy ray* (DC 11). Manifester level 1st.

*Possessions: +1 chitin armor,* masterwork iron greatsword, composite (+3) longbow, 20 iron arrows.

## Balic Adventures

PCs in Balic often find themselves embroiled in maenad clan politics, the machinations of Andropinis, or exploration of the Sea of Silt.

- A silt sailer known as the *First Lament* has been missing for a month and presumed destroyed by a Tyr-storm. But last night another ship-captain received a faint psionic *sending* from the *Lament*'s bosun, who described an island inhabited by strange giants. The PCs get shanghaied as part of the rescue mission.
- An elderly maenad woman comes to the PCs in Urik and asks for their protection from a rival clan of maenads who've declared a blood feud and will stop at nothing to see her dead. The rival clan left Balic several weeks ago and is believed to be traveling incognito.
- A maenad scholar doing research in Balic's libraries has found references to a mythical land that parallels the maenads' own tales of their original home. If the PCs confirm the truth of the matter, the maenads will begin construction of a massive portal to take them home. This draws the wrath of Andropinis, who isn't about to let his personal army walk away.

## Tyr

The Free City of Tyr is the only city-state not under the control of a dragon-king. King Kalak died in a bid for immortality more than 300 years ago, and ever since a council of nobles and wizards has governed the city. Despite three major wars with Urik and countless covert attempts to seize the city and its valuable iron mines, Tyr has maintained its independence without the power of a dragon-king.

**Demographics:** Tyr's racial makeup is similar to those of the other Athasian city-states. But it is the only major settlement on Athas where wizards are welcome and arcane spellcasting is legal, so they're far more numerous in Tyr than elsewhere. Conversely, clerics are rarer because Tyr has no templars and only a few elemental clerics.

One of the first acts of the council after Kalak died was to free all the slaves. That grand gesture has eroded somewhat over the years. Trafficking in slaves is still forbidden, and no citizen of Tyr may own a slave. But visitors to the city retain ownership of their slaves, as do merchant houses with holdings in Tyr. Many of Tyr's noble families have long-term contract laborers that technically aren't slaves, but they order them around as if they were mere property. Still, the vast majority of Tyr's residents are free citizens.

**Lands:** Tyr squats at the foot of the Ringing Mountains, and the city-state's iron mines dot the surrounding mountains. A few mountain passes lead west to the Forest Ridge and eventually to the thri-kreen and pterran homelands. To the east are sandy wastes full of elf tribes, many of which have turned to banditry.

**Settlements:** Tyr has something the other city-states desperately want—iron for weapons and other tools—so four major strongholds guard the eastern approaches to the city: Fort Ianto, Fort Amber, Fort Skonz, and Fort Iron. To the northeast is Kled, a large town founded by former slaves shortly before the death of the dragon-king Kalak.

Tyr itself is heavily fortified as well, with a tall, curving wall of stone surrounding the city. It has Athas's largest gladiator arena and a massive ruined ziggurat haunted by the residual presence of Kalak the dragon-king.

**Power Groups:** Tyr's government is an oligarchic council that votes in secret and rules by decree. Immediately after Kalak's demise, members of each of the power groups in the city comprised the council, which almost immediately had to deal with an invasion from Urik. But over the centuries, the composition of the council has shifted toward two groups: Tyr's noble families and a group of preserver wizards known as the Veiled Alliance.

There are about a dozen major families that own the farmland surrounding Tyr, each with two or three branches. The nobles take their duty to Tyr very seriously; they know firsthand that if Urik puts Tyr under siege, Hamanu's army will be standing on their land. However, the noble families have a penchant for bickering and infighting. Many are unable to separate family rivalries from political rivalries.

The Veiled Alliance was once an underground movement of preserver wizards that had cells in each of the city-states. But since Tyr's independence, the city has become a safe haven for wizards and the Alliance's efforts in the other cities have dwindled. The Veiled Alliance still has agents in the other city-states, but they act more as a spy agency for Tyr than an underground movement for wizards specifically.

**Beliefs:** Because there's no state religion in Tyr, a wide array of beliefs flourish, from mystery cults to elemental worship to more esoteric philosophies.

While arcane spellcasting is legal, the Veiled Alliance keeps a sharp eye out for defilers. Because they are themselves wizards, they know firsthand the temptation to defile the land for extra power. But they also know that the good will of Tyr's citizens depends on wizards remaining free from the taint of defilement. In some ways, wizards visiting Tyr have less freedom than in other city-states because the Veiled Alliance is always watching for misdeeds.

**Commerce:** Iron is Tyr's chief export, and they're the only city-state with a surplus of it, so they can demand a great deal in exchange.

Goods made mostly or completely from iron are 10% cheaper to purchase in Tyr than elsewhere. Kled counts as a small city for the gp maximum when buying iron weapons or metal armor there. Tyr is also the only city-state where arcane magic items can be bought and sold openly.

**Language:** Because it's a free city, residents of Tyr are more likely to be multilingual than residents of other city-states. When they speak Common, they often mix in a word or two from another language.

**Arts and Crafts:** Many of Athas's finest smiths and metallurgists call Tyr home. The best craft weapons, armor, and jewelry made of silver or even gold. Beyond the lure of metal weapons, typical treasures from Tyr include gold earrings (1d10 × 100 cp), silver necklaces (3d6 × 100 cp), and bejeweled gold bracelets (1d6 × 1,000 cp).

**Entertainment:** The city of Tyr favors gladiator combat and other arena spectacles almost to the exclusion of other entertainments. At any given moment, there's a gladiator match going on somewhere in the city. Unlike other city-state's gladiators, Tyr's combatants are mostly free citizens. Tyr's gladiators earn the purse for a victory personally because they aren't owned by anyone. Top-notch gladiators have coaching staffs like any professional athlete, including psions who heal their battle damage quickly so they're ready to fight again.

Recently races of crodlus and kank-drawn chariots are becoming more popular, though they're scarcely less violent than outright gladiator fights.

## Tyr Characters

Wizards naturally gravitate toward Tyr, as do former slaves and PCs who find slavery abhorrent. Because Tyr is more libertine than the other city-states, it attracts radical thinkers of all stripes.

**Adventuring Tyrians:** Many PCs from Tyr wish the other city-states were as enlightened as the City of Iron. This draws them into revolutionary activities elsewhere and puts them into conflict with the templars and dragon-kings of other states. And pterrans and thri-kreen are more likely to find their way to Tyr simply because it's the closest city-state to their homeland.

Fighters who battle as gladiators often come from Tyr as well, because Tyr has the most fervent fans (and the biggest purses) of the bloody sport.

Tyr tends to be welcoming of visitors, even if they look outlandish or behave strangely. Many Tyr citizens are immigrants or the descendants of freed slaves, so they tend to be open-minded about PCs from similar circumstances.

**Character Development:** Many of the gladiator stables—most of which are named after colors—have training centers in Tyr where aspiring gladiators can get weapons and hand-to-hand training from more experienced fighters. The Blues are particularly skilled at mounted combat, while the Greens excel an unarmed combat and the Reds with unusual weapons.

The Veiled Alliance recently opened the Alliance Academy, a school for aspiring wizards. Their first students are about to graduate. Most would-be arcanists still learn their craft as apprentices to a single wizard, not in an academic setting, however.

**Character Names:** Many Tyrian names sound Greek to modern ears. Common names include Abras, Aetolos, Celeas, Ericthus, Gurgas, Macletar, Periscus, Derephile, Merote, Phileas, Thaleia, Sophicrus.

## Notable Tyrians

Cassamenus is a mid-level gladiator often matched up against promising newcomers. He shamelessly plays to the crowd, but he'll often whisper "just business, citizen" to new gladiators. While he's showy, he won't kill a helpless foe even if the crowd asks for it. Cassamenus was granted a similar reprieve in his first time in the arena, so he accords his foes the same courtesy. He won't pull any punches against a foe who's still fighting back, however.

**Cassamenus, Mul Ftr6**: CR 6; Medium humanoid (dwarf); HD 6d10+24; hp 57; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (2d4+9, *+1 cahulaks*); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (2d4+9, *+1 cahulaks*); SA psionics; SQ mul traits; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.

*Skills:* Concentration +8, Intimidate +6.

*Feats:* Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (cahulaks), Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Psionic Weapon, Weapon Focus (cahulaks), Weapon Specialization (cahulaks).

*Languages:* Common.

*Powers Known (*3 PP; save DC 11 + power level*):* 1st—*offensive prescience.*

*Possessions: +1 iron cahulaks, +1 bronze half-plate, amulet of natural armor +1.*

## Tyr Encounters

Tyr is the most cosmopolitan of the city-states, so characters can run into almost anything on its streets. Unfortunately, crime in Tyr is higher than elsewhere because it's not an ultramilitant police state.

*EL 5:* These four half-elves are muggers and cutpurses. They'll take what they can off well-heeled pedestrians (like the PCs), and run pell-mell into Tyr's warrenlike alleys.

**Tyr Cutpurses, Half-elf Rog1 (4)**: CR 1; Medium humanoid (half-elf); HD 1d6+1; hp 4; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +0 melee (1d6/18–20, bone rapier) or +1 ranged (1d4, bone dagger); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ half-elf traits, trapfinding; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will –1; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Appraise +5, Bluff +4, Disguise +4, Hide +7, Listen +0, Move Silently +7, Search +6, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +4, Tumble +7.

*Feat:* Dodge.

*Powers Known (*3 PP; save DC 10 + power level*):* 1st—*psionic charm.*

*Languages:* Common, Elven.

*Possessions:* Masterwork studded leather, bone rapier, bone dagger, *potion of invisibility*.

## Tyr Adventures

Because Tyr is such a hotbed of political activity, adventures there are more likely to involve intrigue than elsewhere on Athas.

- A massive sandstorm (as described in the Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) engulfs Fort Amber while the PCs are passing through. With most of the populace sheltered in various barracks, junior military officers launch a coup attempt, dashing from building to building and trying to kill or disable the fort's commanders.
- Multiple eyewitnesses have reported strange, reptilian apparitions lurking above Kalak's ruined ziggurat. The Tyr Council sends the PCs in to investigate—has Kalak himself returned?
- Tyr's Veiled Alliance sends the PCs to rescue an undercover agent in another city-state who's no longer responding to magical communications. They promise powerful arcane magic if the characters extract the agent without blowing her cover.

## Beyond the Tablelands

While the seven city-states dominate their region, they aren't the only adventure sites on Athas.

**Ringing Mountains and the Forest Ridge:** The steep Ringing Mountains form the western edge of the Tablelands region. From a distance, their cliffs look nearly vertical and impossible to climb. But narrow roads do wind up to a few mountain passes that lead to what is possibly Athas's largest woodland: The Forest Ridge.

A great forest of firs, birches, and bamboo trees covers the western slopes of the Ringing Mountains. The air is moist in the Forest Ridge, and intermittent rain is a daily occurrence. While the Forest Ridge teems with life, it isn't all friendly. Tribes of feral, cannibal halflings stalk the few paths through the Forest Ridge, hunting any outsiders who trespass in their realm.

The halfling's large town of Ogo is the only known settlement in the Forest Ridge. While they are no less fierce than the halflings that hunt throughout the forest, the Ogo halflings are more accustomed to dealing with nonhalflings. In exchange for fine Urik obsidian, Ogo sends 200 halfling warriors to serve the dragon-king Hamanu every year.

**Lost Scale and Pterran Vale:** Two settlements—together comprising a large town—are the ancestral home of the pterrans (see *Dragon* #319). A hundred miles west of the Forest Ridge, Lost Scale and Pterran Vale sit amid scrub plains. Pterran Vale residents regard themselves as more civilized, living in huts and lodges made from the bones and hides of creatures they've hunted or raised themselves. The pterrans of Lost Scale are seminomadic, famous for riding pterraxes and scouring the plains for game.

**Winter Nest:** Along the Sea of Silt north of the Tablelands are the White Mountains, and nestled among them is the aarakocra small city of Winter Nest. The altitude is so great that the temperature is often cool enough to sustain ice. The city is disconcerting to landbound visitors, however, because it was designed for creatures who can fly from place to place.

**Sea of Silt:** Balic's silt sailers ply the shallower parts of the Sea of Silt, but even the best cartographers don't know how far east the sea extends, nor its exact northern and southern boundaries. While much of the sea is indeed a featureless plain of pearl-colored silt, many islands within the sea are ruins of bygone ages or the lairs of powerful monsters.

The Silt Sea's dominant feature is the Cerulean Storm, a persistent weather spot (like Jupiter's red spot) that is equal parts sandstorm and hurricane. The Cerulean Storm remains more or less stationary hundreds of miles east of Balic, but it periodically births Tyr-storms that head west at great speed, leaving torrential rains, massive sandstorms, and destructive winds in their wake.

**Ledopolus:** The twin cities of North and South Ledopolus guard the shores at a narrow point in the Estuary of the Forked Tongue. The ancestral home of the dwarves in the Tablelands, Ledopolus retains its independence, but its leaders dare not cross Andropinis or Lalali-Puy—even the most committed dwarves couldn't stand against the army of a dragon-king.

Between the two cities is the Island of Ledo, where the dwarves are building a massive fortress of unknown purpose. Ledo was inhabited by giants until the dwarves wiped them out about a hundred years ago. On other islands of the Silt Sea, their giant brethren are plotting revenge.

**Ruined City-States:** Kalidnay (south of Tyr), Bodach (amid the Great Ivory Plain), and Guistenal (on the shore of the Silt Sea) are city-states destroyed centuries ago. Kalidnay is now home to warring tribes of bandits and monsters. Bodach seems to spontaneously generate undead creatures of all kinds. The current inhabitants of Guistenal, once ruled by Dregoth before he became a lich, are unknown.

**The Jagged Cliffs and Crimson Savannah:** North of the tablelands and west of the Forest Ridge are a series of jagged, wind-whipped cliffs inhabited by halfling tribes that have built gliders and other airships to ascend and descend safely.

Those who safely descend the cliffs find themselves on the Crimson Savannah, named for the reddish soil found in these vast grasslands. The Crimson Savannah is a rich hunting ground for the Kreen Empire, a nation of more than a million thri-kreen and similar species.

**The Last Sea:** North beyond a gorge filled with lava and across a hundred-league plain of scorched earth is the Last Sea, a great body of salt water amid the Thunder Mountains. This place—spoken of often in folklore but rarely seen—is the largest remaining body of open water on Athas. A city known as Saragar sits on the shores of the Last Sea, ruled by psionic masters who don't even tolerate unspoken thoughts of dissent in their realm. Ω

# Dark Sun Monsters

### Part One

**Written by David Noonan Art by Tom Fowler & Jeff Carlisle**

Survival is at a premium on Athas, and one of the best parts of a DARK SUN game is watching your players squirm as they face a monster they've never seen before. The following new monsters can add to that sense of mystery and danger, as can monsters you create yourself. *DUNGEON* #111 will contain even more monsters to use in a DARK SUN campaign.

## Monster Types

Because psionics are so prevalent on Athas, animals can have psionic powers, so long as the powers aren't central to their threat as monsters. If an animal relies on psionics to survive in the world, build it as a magical beast, not an animal.

Mammals are very rare on Athas (beyond many of the PC races), so most animals found in the *Monster Manual* don't exist in a DARK SUN game. Only snakes and vermin will be familiar to your players. Most of the fauna that surrounds them should seem dangerous and alien. DARK SUN monsters look alien enough that it's sometimes hard to tell what creature type they are at a glance. A kank, for example, looks like a giant ant, but it's actually an animal and hence trainable as a mount.

## Compiled List of Monsters

The following monsters are right at home in a DARK SUN campaign. Most appeared in previous editions of the DARK SUN campaign setting, while a few are new creations that are thematically appropriate to the desert world of Athas. The table also includes monsters introduced in this article and those to appear in *DUNGEON* #111.

| CR | Creature | Type | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1/8 | Monstrous centipede, Tiny | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 1/6 | Hurrum, speckled | Vermin | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1/6 | Mulworm | Vermin | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1/6 | Ramphor | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1/4 | Critic lizard | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1/4 | Monstrous centipede, Small | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 1/4 | Monstrous scorpion, Tiny | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 1/3 | Giant fire beetle | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 1/3 | Jankx | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1/3 | Kes'trekel | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1/3 | Rainrunner | Elemental | DUNGEON 111 |
| 1/3 | Snake, Tiny viper | Animal | *Monster Manual* |
| 1/2 | Brain mole | Magical Beast | *Exp. Psionics Handbook* |
| 1/2 | Earthdelver | Elemental | DUNGEON 111 |
| 1/2 | Firesnake | Elemental | DUNGEON 111 |
| 1/2 | Floater | Magical Beast | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1/2 | Monstrous centipede, Medium | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 1/2 | Monstrous scorpion, Small | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 1/2 | Snake, Small viper | Animal | *Monster Manual* |
| 1/2 | Windraptor | Elemental | DUNGEON 111 |
| 1/2 | Yallix | Animal | DUNGEON 111 |
| 1/2 | Z'tal | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1 | Baazrag | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1 | Cinderbrute | Elemental | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1 | Cloudscout | Elemental | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1 | Elemental, Small | Elemental | *Monster Manual* |
| 1 | Giant ant, worker | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 1 | Gith | Humanoid | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1 | Kaorti | Outsider | *Fiend Folio* |
| 1 | Monstrous centipede, Large | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 1 | Monstrous scorpion, Medium | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 1 | Sandknight | Elemental | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1 | Snake, Medium viper | Animal | *Monster Manual* |
| 1 | Wavearcher | Elemental | DUNGEON 110 |
| 1 | Zhackal | Magical Beast | DUNGEON 111 |
| 2 | Azer | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 2 | Belgoi | Humanoid | DUNGEON 111 |
| 2 | Erdlu | Animal | DUNGEON 111 |
| 2 | Folugub | Aberration | *Exp. Psionics Handbook* |
| 2 | Giant ant, queen | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 2 | Giant ant, soldier | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 2 | Giant bombardier beetle | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 2 | Kank | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 2 | Monstrous centipede, Huge | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 2 | Seskarran | Animal | DUNGEON 111 |
| 2 | Snake, constrictor | Animal | *Monster Manual* |
| 2 | Snake, Large viper | Animal | *Monster Manual* |
| 2 | Spinewyrm, wyrmling | Dragon | DUNGEON 110 |
| 2 | Thoqqua | Elemental | *Monster Manual* |
| 3 | Aoa, droplet | Outsider | *Fiend Folio* |
| 3 | Arrowhawk, juvenile | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 3 | Crodlu | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 3 | Crysmal | Elemental | *Exp. Psionics Handbook* |
| 3 | Elemental, Medium | Elemental | *Monster Manual* |
| 3 | Ephemera, dusk beast | Outsider | *Manual of the Planes* |
| 3 | Fihyr | Aberration | *Monster Manual II* |
| 3 | Jhakar | Animal | DUNGEON 111 |
| 3 | Mephit (all) | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 3 | Monstrous scorpion, Large | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 3 | Rasclinn | Magical Beast | DUNGEON 111 |
| 3 | Salamander, flamebrother | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 3 | Shadow | Undead | *Monster Manual* |
| 3 | Snake, Huge viper | Animal | *Monster Manual* |
| 3 | Spinewyrm, very young | Dragon | DUNGEON 110 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Swarm, locust | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 3 | Tojanida, juvenile | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 3 | Xorn, minor | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 4 | Baazrag, boneclaw | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 4 | Energon, xag-ya | Outsider | *Manual of the Planes* |
| 4 | Fordorran | Magical Beast | DUNGEON 111 |
| 4 | Giant stag beetle | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 4 | Lirr | Magical Beast | DUNGEON 111 |
| 4 | Pterrax | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 4 | Razorwing | Animal | DUNGEON 111 |
| 4 | Swarm, centipede | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 5 | Arrowhawk, adult | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 5 | Cilops | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 5 | Crodlu, heavy | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 5 | Dune reaper drone | Magical Beast | DUNGEON 111 |
| 5 | Elemental, Large | Elemental | *Monster Manual* |
| 5 | Energon, xeg-yi | Outsider | *Manual of the Planes* |
| 5 | Genie, djinni | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 5 | Inix | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 5 | Psurlon, average | Aberration | *Monster Manual II* |
| 5 | Rast | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 5 | Ravid | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 5 | Snake, giant constrictor | Animal | *Monster Manual* |
| 5 | Spinewyrm, young | Dragon | DUNGEON 110 |
| 5 | Tojanida, adult | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 5 | Udoroot | Plant | *Exp. Psionics Handbook* |
| 6 | Belker | Elemental | *Monster Manual* |
| 6 | Elemental air drake | Dragon | *Draconomicon* |
| 6 | Monst. centipede, Gargantuan | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 6 | Salamander | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 6 | Sand howler | Magical Beast | DUNGEON 110 |
| 6 | Xill | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 6 | Xorn | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 7 | Chaos beast | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 7 | Elemental, Huge | Elemental | *Monster Manual* |
| 7 | Flesh golem | Construct | *Monster Manual* |
| 7 | Genie, dao | Outsider | *Manual of the Planes* |
| 7 | Gray glutton | Magical Beast | *Exp. Psionics Handbook* |
| 7 | Intellect devourer | Aberration | *Exp. Psionics Handbook* |
| 7 | Invisible stalker | Elemental | *Monster Manual* |
| 7 | Mekillot | Animal | DUNGEON 110 |
| 7 | Monstrous scorpion, Huge | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 8 | Arrowhawk, elder | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 8 | Elemental water drake | Dragon | *Draconomicon* |
| 8 | Genie, efreeti | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 8 | Mastyrial | Animal | DUNGEON 111 |
| 8 | Quetzalcoatlus | Animal | *Monster Manual II* |
| 8 | Shadow, greater | Undead | *Monster Manual* |
| 8 | Shield guardian | Construct | *Monster Manual* |
| 8 | Spinewyrm, juvenile | Dragon | DUNGEON 110 |
| 8 | Swarm, hellwasp | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 8 | Xorn, elder | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 9 | Braxat | Monstrous Humanoid | *Monster Manual II* |
| 9 | Caller in darkness | Undead | *Exp. Psionics Handbook* |
| 9 | Dune reaper warrior | Magical Beast | DUNGEON 111 |
| 9 | Elemental, greater | Elemental | *Monster Manual* |
| 9 | Elemental smoke drake | Dragon | *Draconomicon* |
| 9 | Genie, marid | Outsider | *Manual of the Planes* |
| 9 | Monstrous centipede, Colossal | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 9 | Psurlon, elder | Aberration | *Monster Manual II* |
| 9 | Roc | Animal | *Monster Manual* |
| 9 | Rukanyr | Aberration | *Fiend Folio* |
| 9 | Spinewyrm, young adult | Dragon | DUNGEON 110 |
| 9 | Tojanida, elder | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 10 | Clay golem | Construct | *Monster Manual* |
| 10 | Elemental fire drake | Dragon | *Draconomicon* |
| 10 | Monstrous scorpion, Gargantuan | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 10 | Salamander, noble | Outsider | *Monster Manual* |
| 11 | Elemental, elder | Elemental | *Monster Manual* |
| 11 | Elemental earth drake | Dragon | *Draconomicon* |
| 11 | Gaj | Aberration | DUNGEON 111 |
| 11 | Spinewyrm, adult | Dragon | DUNGEON 110 |
| 11 | Stone golem | Construct | *Monster Manual* |
| 12 | Elemental ooze drake[1] | Dragon | *Draconomicon* |
| 12 | Monstrous scorpion, Colossal | Vermin | *Monster Manual* |
| 12 | Psion-killer | Construct | *Exp. Psionics Handbook* |
| 12 | Rampager[2] | Magical Beast | *Monster Manual II* |
| 13 | Elemental magma drake | Dragon | *Draconomicon* |
| 13 | Spinewyrm, mature adult | Dragon | DUNGEON 110 |
| 15 | Great fihyr | Aberration | *Monster Manual II* |
| 15 | Nightmare beast | Magical Beast | *Monster Manual II* |
| 15 | Psurlon, giant | Aberration | *Monster Manual II* |
| 15 | Spinewyrm, old | Dragon | DUNGEON 110 |
| 16 | Moonbeast[3] | Aberration | *Monster Manual II* |
| 16 | Stone golem, greater | Construct | *Monster Manual* |
| 17 | Spinewyrm, very old | Dragon | DUNGEON 110 |
| 18 | Desert landwyrm | Dragon | *Draconomicon* |
| 19 | Spinewyrm, ancient | Dragon | DUNGEON 110 |
| 20 | Megapede | Vermin | *Monster Manual II* |
| 20 | Spinewyrm, wyrm | Dragon | DUNGEON 110 |
| 22 | Spinewyrm, great wyrm | Dragon | DUNGEON 110 |
| 23 | Spirit of the land | Fey | *Monster Manual II* |

*1: Elemental ooze drakes are called elemental silt drakes on Athas.*

*2: Rampagers are called so-ut on Athas.*

*3: Moonbeasts are called stalking horrors on Athas.*

## Baazrag

Medium Animal
**Hit Dice**: 2d8+4 (13 hp)
**Initiative**: +2
**Speed**: 40 ft. (8 squares)
**Armor Class**: 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +1/+2
**Attack**: Bite +2 melee (1d6+1 plus wounding)
**Full Attack**: Bite +2 melee (1d6+1 plus wounding)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Wounding
**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision, scent
**Saves**: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1
**Abilities**: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
**Skills**: Hide +2, Listen +5, Move Silently +3, Spot +5, Survival +1*
**Feats**: Alertness, Track$^B$
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary or swarm (2–16)
**Challenge Rating**: 1
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 3 HD (Medium), 4–6 HD (Large)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This quadruped is covered with sandy gray bony plates. It has a ridge of spikes along its back and a spiked crest around its neck. Its powerful jaws ooze saliva as it looks at you with beady eyes.*

The baazrag is an omnivore that forages alone by day and returns to the safety of its pack at night. On Athas, it's known for its dangerous bite and fierce disposition.

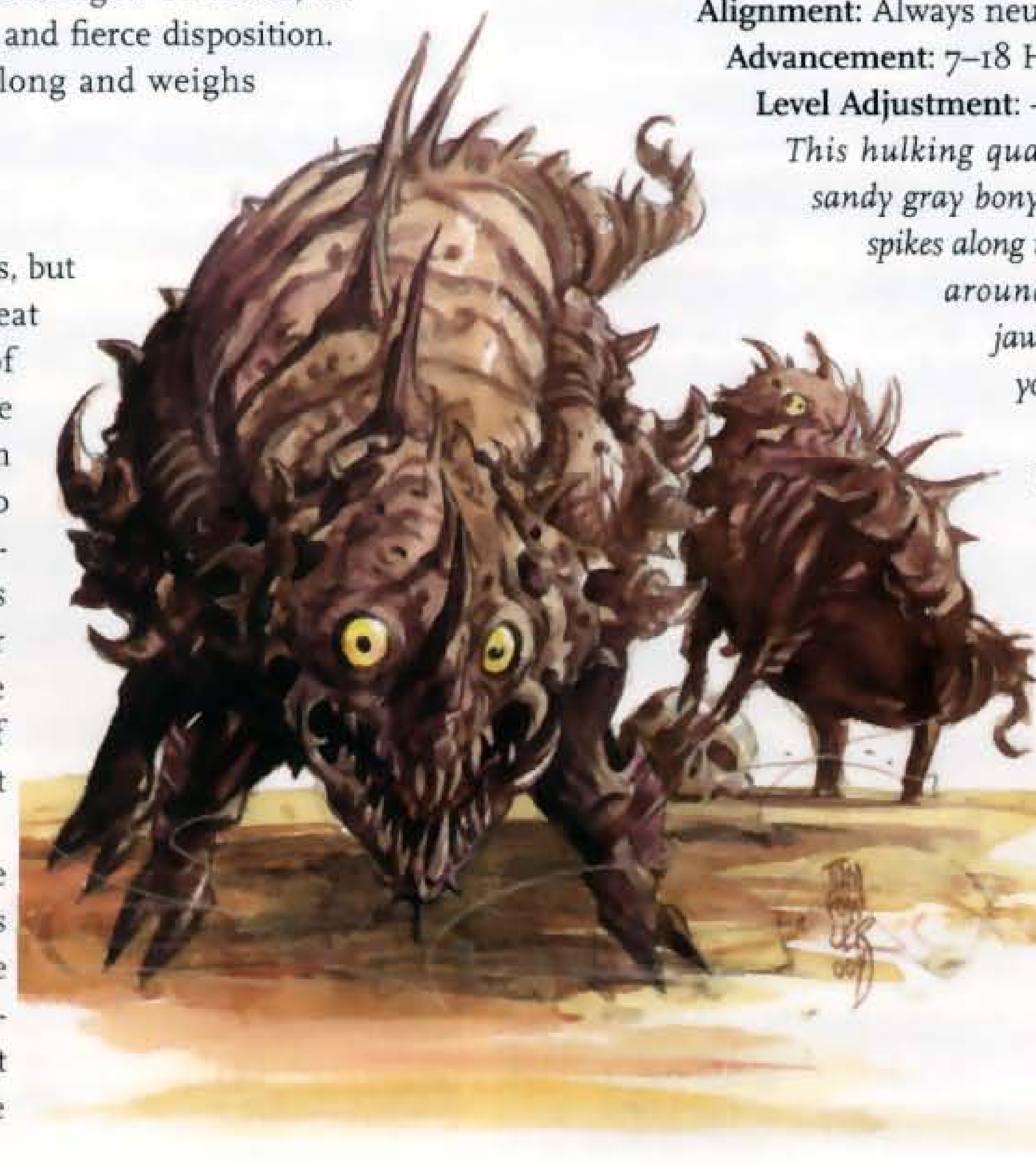
A baazrag is about 3 feet long and weighs from 40 to 60 pounds.

### Combat

Baazrags are tenacious fighters, but they're cagey enough to retreat when they have no chance of winning. They wade into melee with fangs bared, relying on their heavy armor plating to protect them from their enemies. A swarm of baazrags focuses as many of their attacks as possible on one opponent, finishing it off before moving on to the next foe.

**Wounding (Ex)**: An enzyme in the baazrag's saliva inhibits clotting. Any living creature damaged by a baazrag continues to bleed, losing 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds result in cumulative bleeding loss. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 10 Heal check (one check per wound) or the application of a *cure* spell or some other healing magic (which stops bleeding in all wounds).

**Skills**: Baazrags have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.



## Baazrag, Boneclaw

Large Animal
**Hit Dice**: 6d8+18 (45 hp)
**Initiative**: +2
**Speed**: 50 ft. (10 squares)
**Armor Class**: 18 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 16
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +4/+13
**Attack**: Bite +9 melee (1d8+8)
**Full Attack**: Bite +9 melee (1d8+8)
**Space/Reach**: 10 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Wounding
**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision, scent
**Saves**: Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6
**Abilities**: Str 21, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
**Skills**: Hide –2, Listen +7, Move Silently +2, Spot +7, Survival +2*
**Feats**: Alertness, Run, Track$^B$, Weapon Focus (bite)
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary or pack (5–8)
**Challenge Rating**: 4
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 7–18 HD (Large)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This hulking quadruped is covered with sandy gray bony plates. It has a ridge of spikes along its back and a spiked crest around its neck. Its powerful jaws ooze saliva as it looks at you with beady eyes.*

Boneclaw baazrags hunt in packs and roam the sandy wastes, eating almost anything they can run down.

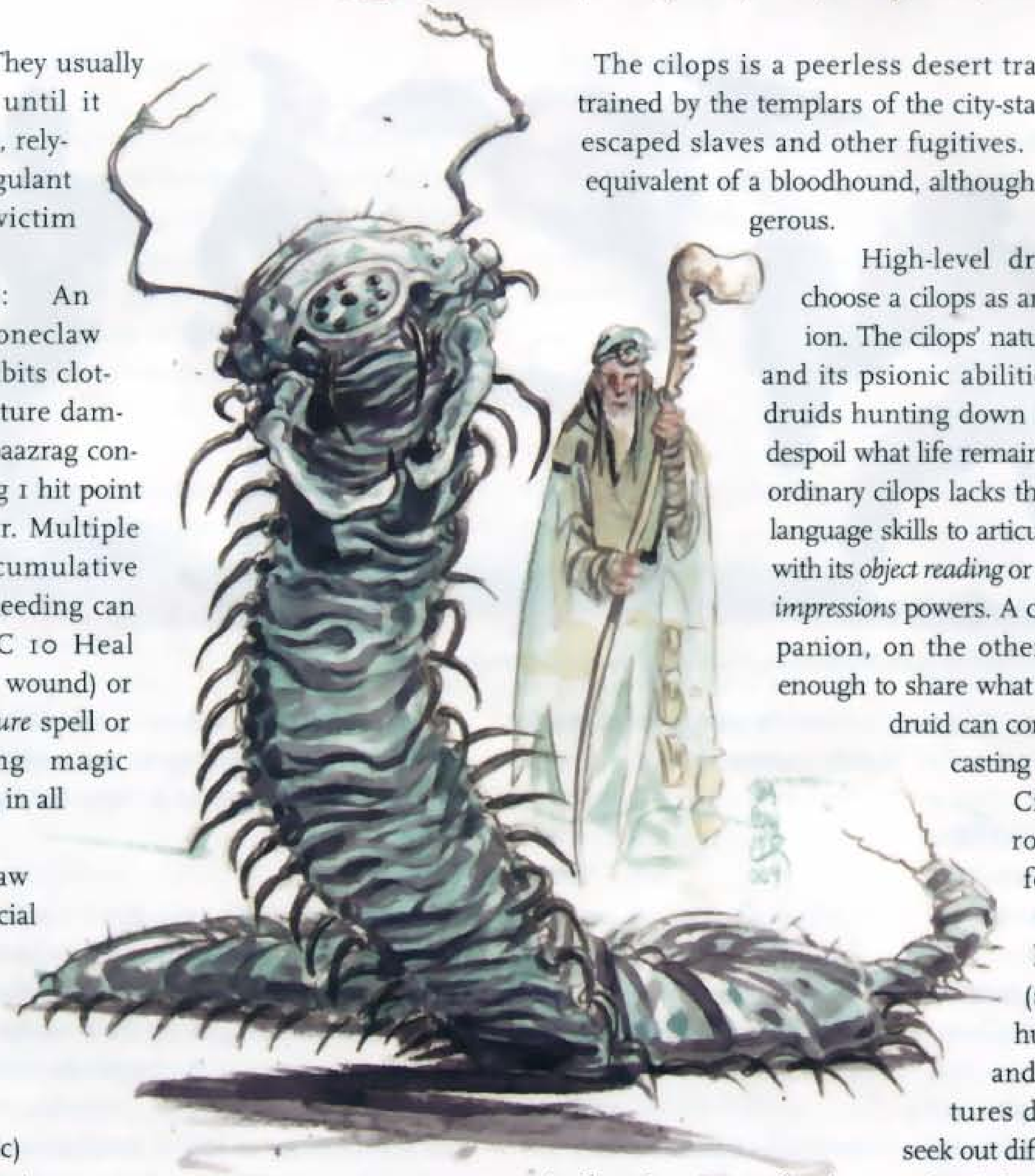
A boneclaw baazrag is about 8 feet long and weighs about 700 pounds.

### Combat

Boneclaw baazrags maneuver to get flanking bonuses whenever possible. They usually harry a single foe until it drops or is staggered, relying on their anticoagulant saliva to finish the victim off.

**Wounding (Ex):** An enzyme in the boneclaw baazrag's saliva inhibits clotting. Any living creature damaged by a boneclaw baazrag continues to bleed, losing 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds result in cumulative bleeding loss. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 10 Heal check (one check per wound) or the application of a *cure* spell or some other healing magic (which stops bleeding in all wounds).

**Skills:** The boneclaw baazrag gains a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.



## Cilops

Large Animal (Psionic)
**Hit Dice:** 8d8+32 (68 hp)
**Initiative:** +3
**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 30 ft.
**Armor Class:** 17 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/+16
**Attack:** Mandibles +11 melee (1d8+6)
**Full Attack:** Mandibles +11 melee (1d8+6) and antennae +7 melee (1d6+3 plus poison)
**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks:** Poison
**Special Qualities:** Psi-like abilities, scent, low-light vision
**Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +4
**Abilities:** Str 22, Dex 17, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6
**Skills:** Climb +14, Listen +8, Spot +8, Survival +13
**Feats:** Alertness, Track, Weapon Focus (antennae)
**Environment:** Warm desert
**Organization:** Solitary or pack (2–5)
**Challenge Rating:** 5
**Treasure:** None
**Alignment:** Always neutral
**Advancement:** 9–12 HD (Large), 10–24 HD (Huge)

*This creature looks like an enormous centipede with long antennae, mandibles, and more than a dozen hooked legs.*

The cilops is a peerless desert tracker sometimes trained by the templars of the city-states to hunt down escaped slaves and other fugitives. It's the Athasian equivalent of a bloodhound, although much more dangerous.

High-level druids sometimes choose a cilops as an animal companion. The cilops' natural ability to track and its psionic abilities are useful for druids hunting down those who would despoil what life remains in the wilds. An ordinary cilops lacks the intelligence and language skills to articulate what it learns with its *object reading* or *sensitivity to psychic impressions* powers. A cilops animal companion, on the other hand, is smart enough to share what it knows, and the druid can converse with it after casting *speak with animals*.

Cilops constantly roam in search of food. Many grow used to a particular kind of food (such as belgoi, humans, or kanks), and track these creatures down rather than seek out different prey.

A cilops is 10 to 15 feet long and weighs from 500 to 700 pounds.

### Combat

In a fight, a cilops lashes out with its sharp mandibles and its paralyzing antennae. If it's particularly hungry, it makes a coup de grace attack against a paralyzed foe, but usually it waits until all threats have been dealt with before feeding.

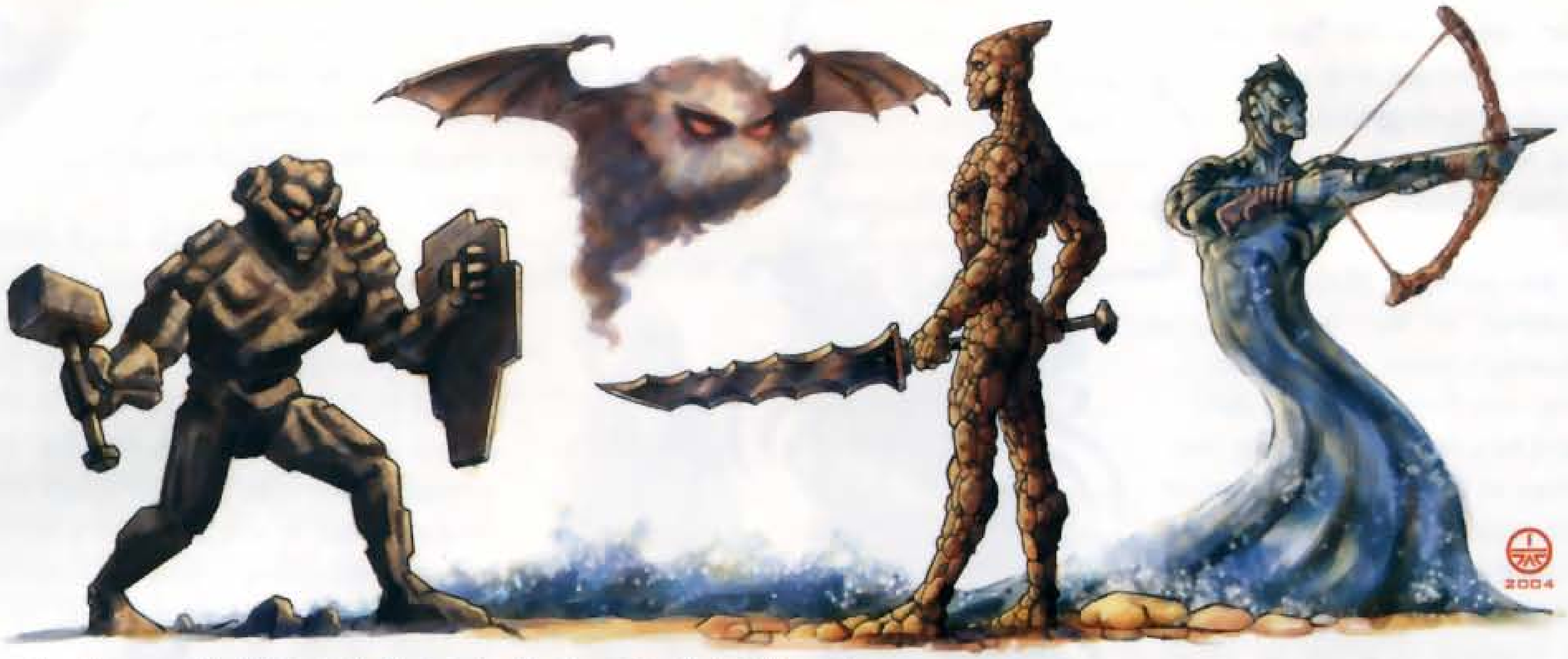
**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 18, initial damage 1d4 Dex, secondary damage paralysis for 2d4 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Psi-Like Abilities (Sp):** At will—*detect hostile intent, know direction and location*; 1/day—*object reading, sensitivity to psychic impressions*. Manifester level 3rd.

**Skills:** Cilopses have a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks. They also have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

### Training a Cilops

Cilops make poor steeds, but they can be trained to hunt down specific individuals, especially when presented with a set of tracks, a scent, or an object that it can use *object reading* on. To be trained, a cilops must have a friendly attitude



Low-Level Summonables (left to right): Cinderbrute, Cloudscout, Sandknight, Wavearcher

toward the trainer. Training a friendly cilops requires six weeks of work and a DC 25 Handle Animal check.

## Cinderbrute

Small Elemental (Fire)
**Hit Dice**: 1d8+2 (6 hp)
**Initiative**: +1
**Speed**: 30 ft. (6 squares)
**Armor Class**: 14 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +2 shield), touch 12, flat-footed 13
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–3
**Attack**: Iron warhammer +2 melee (1d6+1 and 1d4 fire)
**Full Attack**: Iron warhammer +2 melee (1d6+1 and 1d4 fire)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: —
**Special Qualities**: Elemental traits, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, provides illumination as candle, vulnerability to cold
**Saves**: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0
**Abilities**: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8
**Skills**: Spot +4
**Feats**: Dodge
**Environment**: Elemental Plane of Fire
**Organization**: Solitary or squad (2–8)
**Challenge Rating**: 1
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 2–3 HD (Small)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This creature's ashen body is humanoid-shaped, but only in the abstract sense. It carries a battered iron shield on one arm and a warhammer of iron-shod stone in the other.*

Cinderbrutes wander the Elemental Plane of Fire, making war on interlopers—and on each other if there aren't any invaders to fight. They're often summoned to the Material Plane, where they have an instinctive sense of who they're supposed to attack.

A cinderbrute is almost 4 feet tall and weighs about 50 pounds. Cinderbrutes speak and understand Ignan, but they limit their conversations to battlefield orders.

### Combat

Cinderbrutes attack with their warhammers, which glow with heat when wielded by a cinderbrute.

**Using a Cinderbrute's Gear**: If summoned to the Material Plane, cinderbrutes give up their warhammer or shield only if their caster improves their attitude to friendly (they start out indifferent, so it's a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check). The warhammer or shield disappears when the summoning spell ends, even if the cinderbrute was defeated before then.

## Cloudscout

Small Elemental(Air)
**Hit Dice**: 1d8+1 (4 hp)
**Initiative**: +3
**Speed**: Fly 30 ft. (6 squares) (perfect)
**Armor Class**: 14 (+1 size, +3 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 11
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–4
**Attack**: Iron dagger +1 melee (1d3) or +3 ranged (1d3)
**Full Attack**: Iron dagger +1 melee (1d3) or +3 ranged (1d3)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: —
**Special Qualities**: Elemental traits, damage reduction 5/piercing, create daggers
**Saves**: Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +1
**Abilities**: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 8
**Skills**: Listen +3, Spot +6
**Feats**: Alertness
**Environment**: Elemental Plane of Air
**Organization**: Solitary or squad (2–8)
**Challenge Rating**: 1
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral

**Advancement**: 2–3 HD (Small)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This creature looks like a puff of smoke with batlike, smoky wings on each side. Two clots of particularly dark vapor look vaguely like eyes.*

Cloudscouts patrol the vast skies of the Elemental Plane of Air, alert for intruders. Elemental clerics often summon them to the Material Plane as spies or combatants.

A cloudscout is about 3 feet across and weighs about a pound. It speaks and understands Auran.

### Combat

Cloudscouts prefer to throw daggers at their foes from above, but they can also wield them in melee if they need to.

**Create Daggers (Su)**: As a free action once per round, a cloudscout can form an iron dagger from its body. Such daggers disappear after 10 rounds.

## Critic Lizard

Tiny Animal (Psionic)
**Hit Dice**: 1/2d8 (2 hp)
**Initiative**: +2
**Speed**: 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft.
**Armor Class**: 15 (+2 size, +1 Dex, +2 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 14
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–11
**Attack**: Bite +3 melee (1d4–3)
**Full Attack**: Bite +3 melee (1d4–3)
**Space/Reach**: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Psi-like abilities
**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision,
**Saves**: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1
**Abilities**: Str 5, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11
**Skills**: Balance +9, Climb +11, Hide +11, Listen +3, Spot +3
**Feats**: Alertness, Weapon Finesse$^{B}$
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary
**Challenge Rating**: 1/4
**Treasure**: —
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: —
**Level Adjustment**: —

*These brightly scaled lizards have spines along their back that waver and pulse as the creature moves.*

Critic lizards are common household pets on Athas, possessed of rudimentary psionics they use on behalf of creatures who feed and care for them. They are otherwise unaffectionate and aloof.

A critic lizard is a foot long when fully grown and weighs 3 to 4 pounds.

### Combat

Critic lizards don't even like to hunt; they rely completely on their feeders for protection.

**Psi-Like Abilities (Sp)**: 3/day—*detect teleportation, detect psionics.* Manifester level 1st.

**Skills**: A critic liziard recieves a +8 racial bonus on Balance checks. They also have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Critic lizards use their Dexterity modifier to adjust Climb checks rather than their Strength modifier.

## Crodlu

| | **Crodlu** | **Heavy Crodlu** |
|---|---|---|
| | Large Animal | Large Animal |
| **Hit Dice**: | 4d8+16 (34 hp) | 6d8+30 (57 hp) |
| **Initiative**: | +2 | +1 |
| **Speed**: | 50 ft. (10 squares) | 40 ft. (8 squares) |
| **Armor Class**: | 16 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14 | 18 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 17 |
| **Base Attack/Grapple**: | +3/+11 | +4/+13 |
| **Attack**: | Claw +6 melee (1d6+4) | +8 melee (1d6+5) |
| **Full Attack**: | 2 claws +6 melee (1d8+2) and rear claw +4 melee (1d6+2) (1d6+4) and bite +4 melee | 2 claws +8 melee (1d6+5) and bite +6 melee (1d8+2) and rear claw +6 melee (1d6+2) |
| **Space/Reach**: | 10 ft./5 ft. | 10 ft./5 ft. |
| **Special Attacks**: | Pounce | Pounce, ram |
| **Special Qualities**: | Low-light vision | Low-light vision |
| **Saves**: | Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2 | Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +3 |
| **Abilities**: | Str 19, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10 | Str 21, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 12 |
| **Skills**: | Hide +8, Jump +23, Listen +10, Spot +10 | Hide +7, Jump +20, Listen +11, Spot +11 |
| **Feats**: | Multiattack, Run | Improved Bull Rush, Multiattack, Power Attack |
| **Environment**: | Warm deserts | Warm deserts |
| **Organization**: | Solitary, pair, or pack (3–6) | Solitary, pair, or pack (3–6) |
| **Challenge Rating**: | 3 | 5 |
| **Treasure**: | None | None |
| **Alignment**: | Always neutral | Always neutral |
| **Advancement**: | 5–8 HD (Large) | 7–12 HD (Large) |
| **Level Adjustment**: | — | — |

*This upright lizard runs in packs across the desert plains on its powerful hind legs. Its forelimbs have sharp claws, and its beaklike snout opens as it breathes to reveal rows of teeth.*

A distant relative of the erdlu (see DUNGEON #111), the crodlu is a carnivore that uses its speed and claws to good advantage, often leaping onto its prey and tearing it apart.

A crodlu stands about 6 feet tall and weighs from 450 to 500 pounds. Illustrations of crodlus appear on appear on pages 37 and 60.

### Combat

When hunting in packs, crodlus circle around their prey or send one part of the pack around to drive fleeing victims into the waiting claws of the rest of the pack.

**Pounce (Ex)**: If a crodlu charges, it can make a full attack.

**Skills**: Crodlus have a +8 racial bonus on Hide, Jump, Listen, and Spot checks.

### Heavy Crodlu

The heavy crodlu subspecies is stronger and has a thicker hide than the common crodlu, but it isn't as fast. Heavy crodlus are 7 feet tall and weigh 500 to 600 pounds.

**Ram (Ex)**: If a heavy crodlu charges, it can make a special bull rush attempt against the creature it charges. If the heavy crodlu pushes its target more than 5 feet and moves along with it, the heavy crodlu can make a pounce attack at the end of the bull rush.

## Floater

Tiny Magical Beast (Psionic)
**Hit Dice**: 1d10 (5 hp)
**Initiative**: +1
**Speed**: Fly 20 ft. (4 squares) (perfect)
**Armor Class**: 14 (+2 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +1/–10
**Attack**: Tentacles +4 melee (1d3–3 plus poison)
**Full Attack**: Tentacles +4 melee (1d3–3 plus poison)
**Space/Reach**: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Poison, psi-like abilities
**Special Qualities**: Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, fire vulnerability
**Saves**: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1
**Abilities**: Str 4, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 11
**Skills**: Listen +5, Move Silently +15
**Feats**: Weapon Finesse
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary
**Challenge Rating**: 1/2
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 2 HD (Small)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This creature resembles a translucent jellyfish drifting in midair, slowly flexing the tentacles that hang beneath its vaguely spherical body.*

The floater is a desert carrion-eater that preys on weak or disabled creatures, rendering them harmless with its poison or psionic attacks, then consuming them over the course of several days. They tend to be territorial with regard to other floaters, and they jealously guard a corpse they've been eating from any creature that's not obviously tougher than they are.

A floater is about 3 feet long, including its tentacles. It's effectively weightless while alive; a floater body only weighs a pound or two, and the lighter-than-air gases in their central bladders counteract this weight.

### Combat

Floaters strike as quickly as they can, paralyzing any creature that poses a threat. If a fight goes poorly, floaters rise beyond the reach of their foes, launch an *ego whip*, and then flee.

**Poison (Ex)**: A floater's tentacles deliver a paralytic poison that deals initial damage of 1d4 Dexterity and secondary damage of 1d4×10 minutes of paralysis (Fortitude DC 10 negates). The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Psi-Like Abilities (Sp)**: 3/day—*detect psionics, demoralize* (DC 11), *ego whip* (DC 12). Manifester level 1st. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

**Fire Vulnerability (Ex)**: The gases that lift the floater are flammable, so the floater takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from fire, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.

**Skills**: Floaters have a +14 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

## Gith

Medium Humanoid (Gith)
**Hit Dice**: 1d8+1 (5 hp)
**Initiative**: +0
**Speed**: 40 ft. (6 squares)
**Armor Class**: 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 heavy shield), touch 10, flat-footed 14
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/+2
**Attack**: Bronze carrikal +1 melee (1d8+1/×3) or claw +2 melee (1d4+2)
**Full Attack**: Bronze carrikal +2 melee (1d8+2/×3) or 2 claws +2 melee (1d4+2)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Psi-like abilities, rage 1/day
**Special Qualities**: Darkvision 60 ft.
**Saves**: Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0
**Abilities**: Str 15, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 10
**Skills**: Hide +4, Jump +16
**Feats**: Reckless Offense
**Environment**: Any underground
**Organization**: Solitary or warband (4–9) or warband (10–40 plus 1 4th-level wilder and 1d3 2nd-level barbarians)
**Challenge Rating**: 1
**Treasure**: Standard
**Alignment**: Usually chaotic evil
**Advancement**: By character class
**Level Adjustment**: +2

*Part elf, part reptile, this creature brandishes a bronze carrikal in a clawed hand. Its posture is stooped, with a bony ridge running up the center of its curved back.*

The giths are one of the few creatures to make their homes underground on Athas. They often emerge onto the desert sands to raid the surface world.

A gith is about 5 feet tall, although it would be more than 7 feet tall if it stood up straight. It weighs from 160 to 180 pounds.

## Combat

When a gith raiding party spies a likely target, its leaders (often wilders) make a psionic area attack, then the giths charge into melee.

**Psi-Like Abilities (Sp)**: 3/day—*control flames, matter agitation*. Manifester level 1st. The DCs are Charisma-based. Gith gain more psi-like abilities as they gain character levels, as detailed below under "Giths as Characters."

**Rage (Ex)**: When raging, the gith has AC 12, 9 hp, and a carrikal attack of +4 (1d8+4).

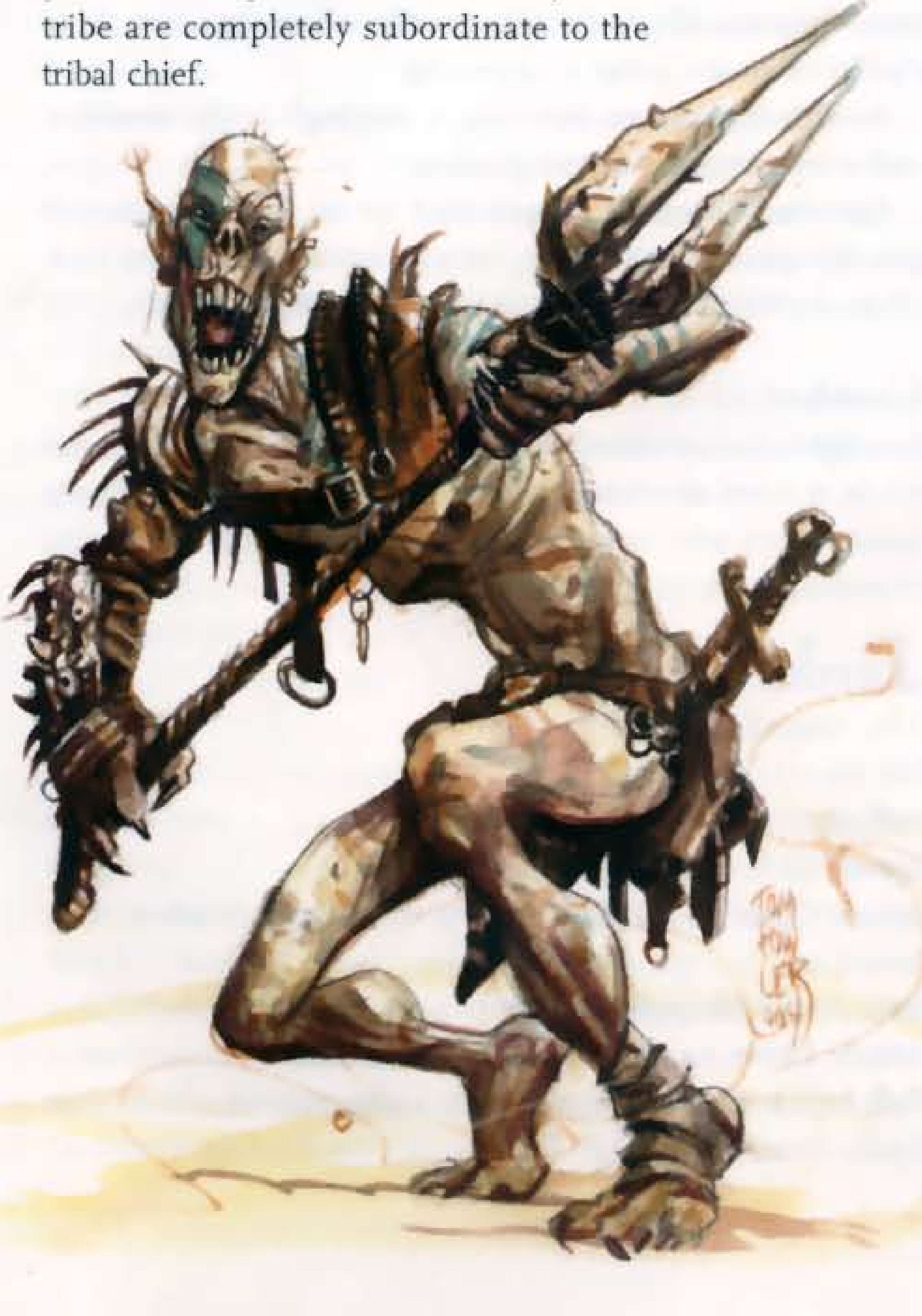
**Skills**: Giths have a +10 racial bonus on Jump checks.

The gith barbarian presented here had the following ability scores before racial adjustments: Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10.

## Gith Society

Giths live in natural underground caves or rocky canyons which they guard with all manner of rockfalls and other natural traps. Some live in the underground ruins of bygone ages and are often uncomprehending of the wondrous treasures and lore available there. Giths tend to flee strong opposition on a raid, but they're tenacious in defense of their lairs.

The gith with the most powerful psionics rules the tribe, because gith have an inborn reverence for psionic power. Other positions of authority within the tribe are completely subordinate to the tribal chief.



## Giths as Characters

Most giths are barbarians. Some of the most powerful giths are rangers, wilders, or neutral evil druids.

Gith characters possess the following racial traits.

- +2 Strength, −2 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom.
- Medium size.
- A gith's base land speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision out to 60 ft.
- *Naturally Psionic*: Gith gain 2 bonus power points at 1st level.
- *Psi-Like Abilities*: Gith gain the following psi-like abilities.

| Level | Psi-Like Abilities |
|---|---|
| 1st–2nd | 3/day—*matter agitation, control flames* |
| 3rd–5th | 3/day—*biofeedback* |
| 6th–8th | 3/day—*control body* |
| 9th+ | 3/day—*psychofeedback*; 1/day—*telekinetic thrust* |

Manifester level equal to 1/2 Hit Dice (minimum 1st). The save DCs are Charisma-based.

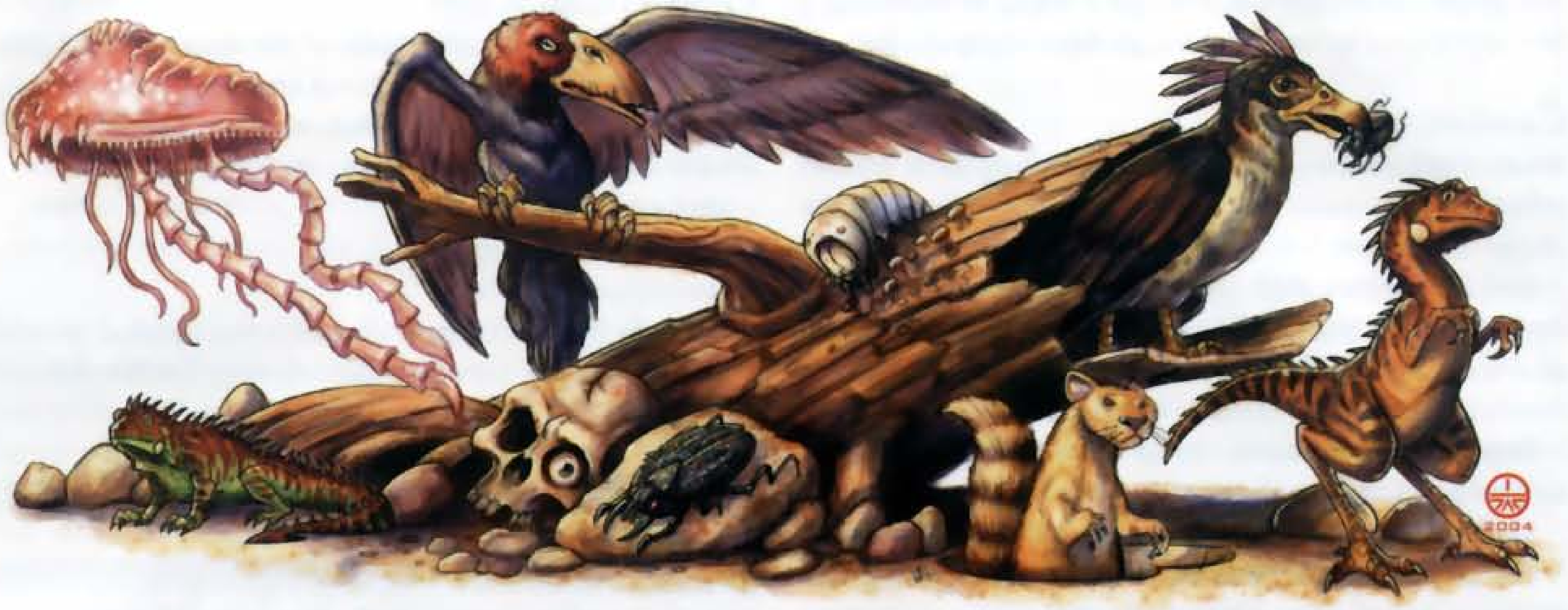
- *Automatic Languages*: Common, Gith. *Bonus Languages*: Dwarven, Pterran, Tariati, Belgoi.
- *Favored Class*: Barbarian.
- *Level Adjustment*: +2.

# Hurrum, Speckled

Tiny Vermin
**Hit Dice**: 1/2d8+2 (4 hp)
**Initiative**: +0
**Speed**: 15 ft. (3 squares)
**Armor Class**: 15 (+2 size, +3 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/−12
**Attack**: Bite +2 melee (1d2−4)
**Full Attack**: Bite +2 melee (1d2−4)
**Space/Reach**: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Psi-like abilities
**Special Qualities**: —
**Saves**: Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0
**Abilities**: Str 3, Dex 10, Con 14, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 10
**Skills**: Climb +8, Hide +8
**Feats**: Weapon Finesse$^{B}$
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary or mating pair
**Challenge Rating**: 1/6
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: —
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This beetle-like insect, about the size of a human face, is a glossy black with rainbow speckles on its back. It flutters its miniscule wings against its carapace, producing a pleasing humming sound.*

Hurrums are beetles known for their pleasant, musical wing-songs. Speckled hurrums, the largest species, have



Familiars (left to right): Floater, Critic Lizard, Kes'trekel, Speckled Hurrum, Mulworm, Jankx, Ramphor, Z'tal.

psionic powers that are likewise soothing for creatures who keep them as pets.

A speckled hurrum is about 5 inches long and weighs less than 1 pound.

### Combat

Hurrums have a bite attack, but they rarely use it. The humming sound from the beating of a hurrum's wings attracts smaller insects for food, and hurrums use their psionic powers to pacify anyone big enough to eat them.

**Psi-Like Abilities (Sp)**: At will—*distract* (DC 11); 1/day—*telempathic projection*. Manifester level 1st. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

**Skills**: Speckled hurrums have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. They use their Dexterity modifier for Climb checks rather than their Strength.

## Inix

Large Animal

**Hit Dice**: 8d8+40 (76 hp)

**Initiative**: +0

**Speed**: 40 ft. (8 squares)

**Armor Class**: 16 (–1 size, +7 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 16

**Base Attack/Grapple**: +6/+18

**Attack**: Bite +13 melee (1d8+8) or tail slap +13 melee (1d6+4)

**Full Attack**: Bite +13 melee (1d8+8) and tail slap +8 melee (1d6+4)

**Space/Reach**: 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with tail)

**Special Attacks**: —

**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision, scent

**Saves**: Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +3

**Abilities**: Str 26, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 2

**Skills**: Listen +14, Spot +3

**Feats**: Alertness, Endurance, Power Attack

**Environment**: Warm deserts

**Organization**: Solitary or pack (2–8)

**Challenge Rating**: 5

**Treasure**: None

**Alignment**: Always neutral

**Advancement**: 9–12 HD (Large); 13–24 HD (Huge)

**Level Adjustment**: —

*This armored lizard slowly sweeps the ground behind it with its long tail. It sniffs the air, wrinkling its snout to reveal rows of sharp teeth.*

Inixes are often domesticated because they make strong, spirited mounts. They relish a good fight and are sometimes difficult to guide away from the battlefield. Because they sway dramatically from side to side when they run, Ride checks on inixes suffer a –4 penalty.

An inix is about 10 feet long, 5 feet high at the shoulder, and it weighs about 6,000 pounds.

**Carrying Capacity**: A light load for an inix is up to 918 pounds; a medium load 919–1,839 pounds; and a heavy load, 1,840–2,760 pounds. An inix can drag 13,800 pounds.

### Combat

In a fight, an inix often lashes out with its tail against one foe while it bites another. It sometimes readies a tail sweep against foes who enter its threatened squares, surprising enemies who aren't expecting 10 feet of reach.

## Jankx

Tiny Animal

**Hit Dice**: 1/2d8 (2 hp)

**Initiative**: +2

**Speed**: 20 ft. (4 squares), burrow 10 ft.

**Armor Class**: 16 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 14

**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–11

**Attack**: Claws +4 melee (1d2–3 plus poison)

**Full Attack**: Claws +4 melee (1d2–3 plus poison)

**Space/Reach**: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks**: Poison
**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision, scent
**Saves**: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2
**Abilities**: Str 5, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 5
**Skills**: Hide +6, Listen +14, Move Silently +6, Spot +6
**Feats**: Alertness, Weapon Finesse$^{B}$
**Environment**: Warm desert
**Organization**: Solitary, pack (2–9), or warren (10–100)
**Challenge Rating**: 1/3
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: —
**Level Adjustment**: —

*These furry creatures have golden hides, sleek bodies, and four short legs. Their bark is little more than a barely-audible high-pitched squeak*

Jankxes live in burrow communities, from which they scour the desert surface at night for food. Their eyesight is barely adequate, but they are possessed of both keen hearing and a sensitive nose. Their golden pelts fetch a high price among clothiers and artisans, but jankxes are difficult to trap.

A jankx is about 1 foot tall when it's standing on its hind legs. It weighs from 5 to 7 pounds.

### Combat

When defending their burrows, jankxes are fierce combatants. If attacked, a jankx's first instinct is to alert the rest of the burrow. The sight of dozens of jankxes pouring out of holes in the ground is often the last thing an unlucky jankx trapper sees.

**Poison (Ex)**: The claws of the jankx are designed for digging and foraging, but they also have a retractable spur connected to poison sacs in their shoulders. The poison, usable once a day, deals initial and secondary damage of 1d4 Strength (Fortitude DC 10 negates). The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Skills**: Jankxes have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks and a +8 racial bonus on Listen checks, but a –4 racial penalty on Hide checks due to their golden pelts.

## Kank

Large Animal
**Hit Dice**: 3d8+9 (22 hp)
**Initiative**: +1
**Speed**: 50 ft. (10 squares)
**Armor Class**: 15 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +2/+9
**Attack**: Pincer +4 melee (1d6+4 plus poison)
**Full Attack**: Pincer +4 melee (1d6+4 plus poison)
**Space/Reach**: 10 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Poison
**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision
**Saves**: Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2
**Abilities**: Str 16, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
**Skills**: Jump +14, Listen +4
**Feats**: Endurance, Run
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary, pack (2–5) or herd (6–30)
**Challenge Rating**: 2
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: —
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This creature looks like a giant ant with thicker limbs and a placid disposition. Its eyes glitter with a degree of intellect, and it makes a soft, humming sound.*

These antlike animals are perhaps the most important prevalent animals on Athas. The statistics above describe riding or dray kanks, which are taken from the warrior caste in a kank herd. Other kanks produce melon-sized globules of green honey that feed their young (if wild) or are harvested by their owners (if domesticated). Honey-producing kanks lack poison pincers.

Kanks are omnivorous grazers who'll eat nearly anything organic, seemingly without preference. When they die, they decompose messily within an hour, leaving behind a pile of foul-smelling organic sludge that's unappealing even to a starving denizen of Athas.

A kank is 4 to 5 feet tall at the shoulder, some 8 feet long, and weighs from 400 to 500 pounds.

**Carrying Capacity**: A light load for a kank is up to 200 pounds; a medium load 201–400 pounds; and a heavy load, 401–600 pounds. A kank can drag 3,000 pounds.

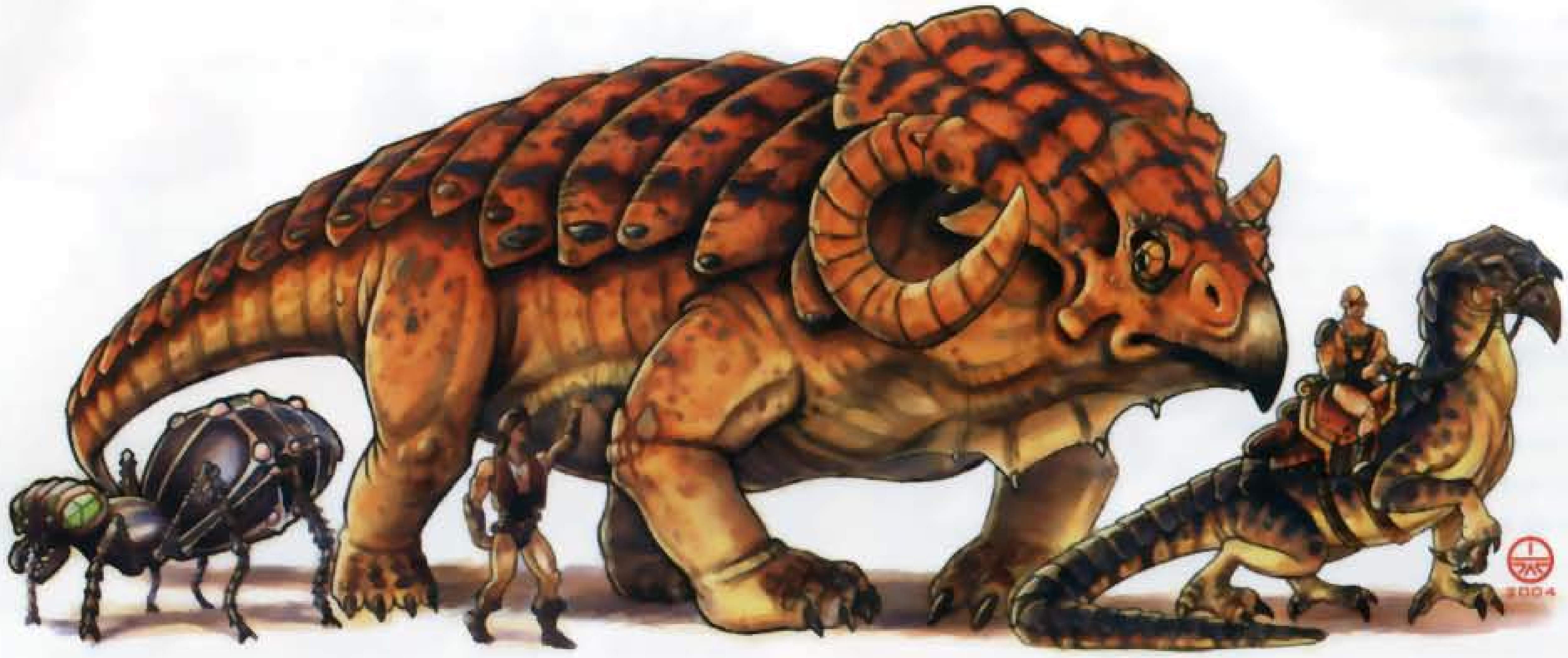
### Combat

Kanks fight only when directly threatened, and even then only if they have poison pincers; honey-producing kanks run away unless cornered.

**Poison (Ex)**: A kank has poisonous pincers that deal initial and secondary damage of 1d4 rounds of paralysis (Fort DC 13 negates).

## Kes'trekel

Tiny Animal
**Hit Dice**: 1d8 (4 hp)
**Initiative**: +3
**Speed**: 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)
**Armor Class**: 16 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 13
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–10
**Attack**: Talons +5 melee (1d4–2)
**Full Attack**: Talons +5 melee (1d4–2)
**Space/Reach**: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Aversion
**Special Qualities**: —
**Saves**: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2
**Abilities**: Str 6, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 14



Beasts of Burden (left to right): Kank, Mekillot, Inix.

**Skills**: Listen +4, Spot +12
**Feats**: Alertness, Weapon Finesse[B]
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary, pair, or flock (3–18)
**Challenge Rating**: 1/3
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: —
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This scavenger bird soars high above the desert sands, its sharp eyes alert for potential meals. Its plumage varies from gray to black, except on its head where it's a bright crimson. Its talons look sharp, and its beak has rough serrations along the edges.*

The kes'trekel is the most common carrion-eating bird in the deserts of Athas. By day, they search the vast barrens, looking for corpses to eat or weak creatures they can finish off. They're patient animals, willing to circle lazily overhead for hours while their next meal succumbs to heat, thirst, or another of Athas' dangers. They retreat to their well-hidden nests at night

A kes'trekel has a wingspan of three to four feet. It weighs between 1 and 2 pounds.

## Combat

Kes'trekels rarely fight because their meals are generally dead or dying before they approach. They flee into the sky when faced with more serious threats.

**Aversion (Ex)**: Individual kes'trekels aren't psionic, but a flock can collectively combine their miniscule minds to psionically warn creatures away from a kes'trekel meal. Creatures within 100 feet of four or more kes'trekels must succeed on a DC 12 Will save or gain an aversion to kes'trekels for 10 minutes. Affected creatures must stay at least 100 feet away from any kes'trekels, alive or dead; if already within 100 feet, they move away. A subject unable to move away, or one attacked by kes'trekels, is overcome with revulsion, which reduces the creature's Dexterity score by 4 points until the effect wears off or the subject is no longer within 20 feet of a kes'trekel. This ability is otherwise similar to *antipathy* (caster level 15th). The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Skills**: Kes'trekels have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks.

# Mekillot

Huge Animal
**Hit Dice**: 11d8+55 (104 hp)
**Initiative**: +0
**Speed**: 40 ft. (8 squares)
**Armor Class**: 18 (–2 size, +10 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 18
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +8/+26
**Attack**: Bite +16 melee (2d6+15) or tongue +16 melee (1d8+15)
**Full Attack**: Bite +16 melee (2d6+15) or tongue +16 melee (1d8+15)
**Space/Reach**: 15 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with tongue)
**Special Attacks**: Improved grab, swallow whole
**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision
**Saves**: Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +4
**Abilities**: Str 30, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 7
**Skills**: Listen +8, Spot +8
**Feats**: Awesome Blow, Endurance, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Domesticated or throng (2–5)
**Challenge Rating**: 7
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 12–16 (Huge); 17–22 HD (Gargantuan)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This immense, squat lizard has curling horns to either side of its wide snout. Its long, snakelike tongue flickers in and out of its toothy maw.*

The mekillot is a lizard frequently domesticated as a dray animal. Even a well-trained mekillot is unpredictable, and many occasionally make a meal of their handler.

A typical mekillot is about 25 feet long and weighs about 12,000 pounds. Larger specimens exist that grow up to 50 feet long.

**Carrying Capacity**: A light load for a mekillot is up to 3,192 pounds; a medium load 3,193–6,384 pounds; and a heavy load, 6,385–9,600 pounds. A mekillot can drag 48,000 pounds.

### Combat

An angry mekillot simply pushs foes out of the way unless it's hungry. If it wants a meal, it uses its prehensile tongue to grab a creature and drag it into its mouth. The mekillot can't bite in a round when it attacks with its tongue, or vice versa.

**Improved Grab (Ex)**: To use this ability, the mekillot must hit a creature one size category smaller than itself with its tongue attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to swallow the opponent in the following round.

**Swallow Whole (Ex)**: A mekillot can try to swallow a grabbed opponent at least two size categories smaller than itself by making a successful grapple check. A swallowed creature takes 2d8+10 points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round from the mekillot's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 15). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out.

A mekillot's gizzard can hold 2 Medium, 8 Small, 32 Tiny, or 128 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

## Mulworm

Diminutive Vermin
**Hit Dice**: 1/4d8 (1 hp)
**Initiative**: +1
**Speed**: 5 ft. (1 square), climb 5 ft.
**Armor Class**: 16 (+4 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 15
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–17
**Attack**: Bite +1 melee (1d2–5 plus disease)
**Full Attack**: Bite +5 melee (1d2–5 plus disease)
**Space/Reach**: 1 ft./0 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Acidic innards, disease
**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision
**Saves**: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2
**Abilities**: Str 1, Dex 12, Con 11, Int —, Wis 14, Cha 4
**Skills**: Climb +13, Hide +13
**Feats**: Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse$^{B}$
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary or Host (2–100)
**Challenge Rating**: 1/6
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: —
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This white, segmented caterpillar leaves a faint trail of sticky residue behind it as it crawls.*

Most mulworms remain in their caterpillar stage for months or years, depending on their diet of berries and tree-bark. Then they wrap themselves in cocoons while they transform into butterflies, which mate and die in a matter of days or weeks.

A mulworm is about 1 foot long and 2 inches in diameter. It weighs less than 1 pound.

### Combat

Possessed of an ineffectual bite, the mulworm has nevertheless evolved some defenses to make predators regret their choice of meal.

**Acidic Innards (Ex)**: The mulworm's internal fluids are highly acidic when exposed to the air. When a mulworm takes damage from a slashing or piercing weapon, creatures in the same square take 1d6 points of acid damage.

**Disease (Ex)**: Mulworm rash—bite, Fortitude DC 10, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Cha. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Skills**: Mulworms have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. They can use their Dexterity modifier on Climb checks.

## Pterrax

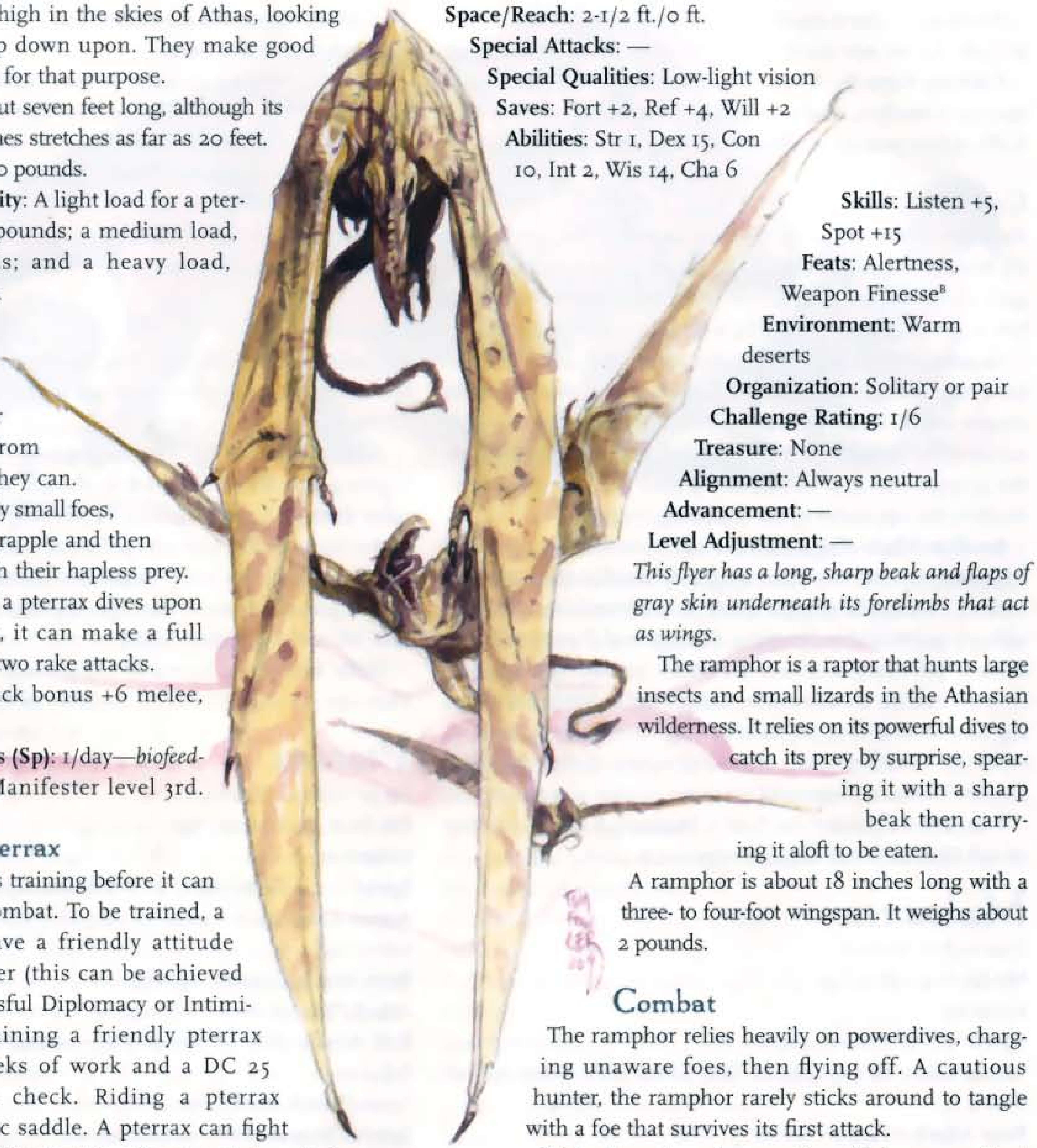
Large Animal (Psionic)
**Hit Dice**: 6d8+18 (45 hp)
**Initiative**: +2
**Speed**: 20 ft. (4 squares); fly 80 ft. (average)
**Armor Class**: 16 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +4/+12
**Attack**: Bite +8 melee (1d6+4)
**Full Attack**: Bite +8 melee (1d6+4) and 2 claws +5 melee (1d4+2)
**Space/Reach**: 10 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Pounce, rake 1d6+2
**Special Qualities**: Psi-like abilities, low-light vision
**Saves**: Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +5
**Abilities**: Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 8
**Skills**: Spot +10
**Feats**: Iron Will, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (bite)
**Environment**: Warm desert
**Organization**: Solitary or flock (6–10)
**Challenge Rating**: 4
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 8–10 HD (Large); 11–21 HD (Huge)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This large creature is a slender, tan-colored reptiloid with a pair of large wings stretched behind its forelimbs, which end in sharp claws. Its rear limbs have claws as well, and it beaky snout shows rows of teeth.*

Pterraxes soar high in the skies of Athas, looking for prey to swoop down upon. They make good mounts if trained for that purpose.

A pterrax is about seven feet long, although its wingspan sometimes stretches as far as 20 feet. It weighs about 500 pounds.

**Carrying Capacity**: A light load for a pterrax is up to 300 pounds; a medium load, 301–600 pounds; and a heavy load, 601–900 pounds.



## Combat

Pterraxes pounce on their prey, striking from above whenever they can. Against particularly small foes, they sometimes grapple and then take to the air with their hapless prey.

**Pounce (Ex)**: If a pterrax dives upon or charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

**Rake (Ex)**: Attack bonus +6 melee, damage 1d6+2.

**Psi-like Abilities (Sp)**: 1/day—*biofeedback, empathy*. Manifester level 3rd.

## Training a Pterrax

A pterrax requires training before it can bear a rider in combat. To be trained, a pterrax must have a friendly attitude toward the trainer (this can be achieved through a successful Diplomacy or Intimidate check). Training a friendly pterrax requires six weeks of work and a DC 25 Handle Animal check. Riding a pterrax requires an exotic saddle. A pterrax can fight while carrying a rider, but the rider cannot also attack unless he or she succeeds on a Ride check (DC 10).

Pterrax eggs are worth 2,000 cp apiece on the open market, while young are worth 3,000 cp each. Professional trainers charge 1,500 cp to rear or train a pterrax.

# Ramphor

Tiny Animal
**Hit Dice**: 1/4d8 (2 hp)
**Initiative**: +2
**Speed**: 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 60 ft. (average)
**Armor Class**: 15 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–13
**Attack**: Beak +4 melee (1d3–5)
**Full Attack**: Beak +4 melee (1d3–5)
**Space/Reach**: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.
**Special Attacks**: —
**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision
**Saves**: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2
**Abilities**: Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6
**Skills**: Listen +5, Spot +15
**Feats**: Alertness, Weapon Finesse$^{B}$
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary or pair
**Challenge Rating**: 1/6
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: —
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This flyer has a long, sharp beak and flaps of gray skin underneath its forelimbs that act as wings.*

The ramphor is a raptor that hunts large insects and small lizards in the Athasian wilderness. It relies on its powerful dives to catch its prey by surprise, spearing it with a sharp beak then carrying it aloft to be eaten.

A ramphor is about 18 inches long with a three- to four-foot wingspan. It weighs about 2 pounds.

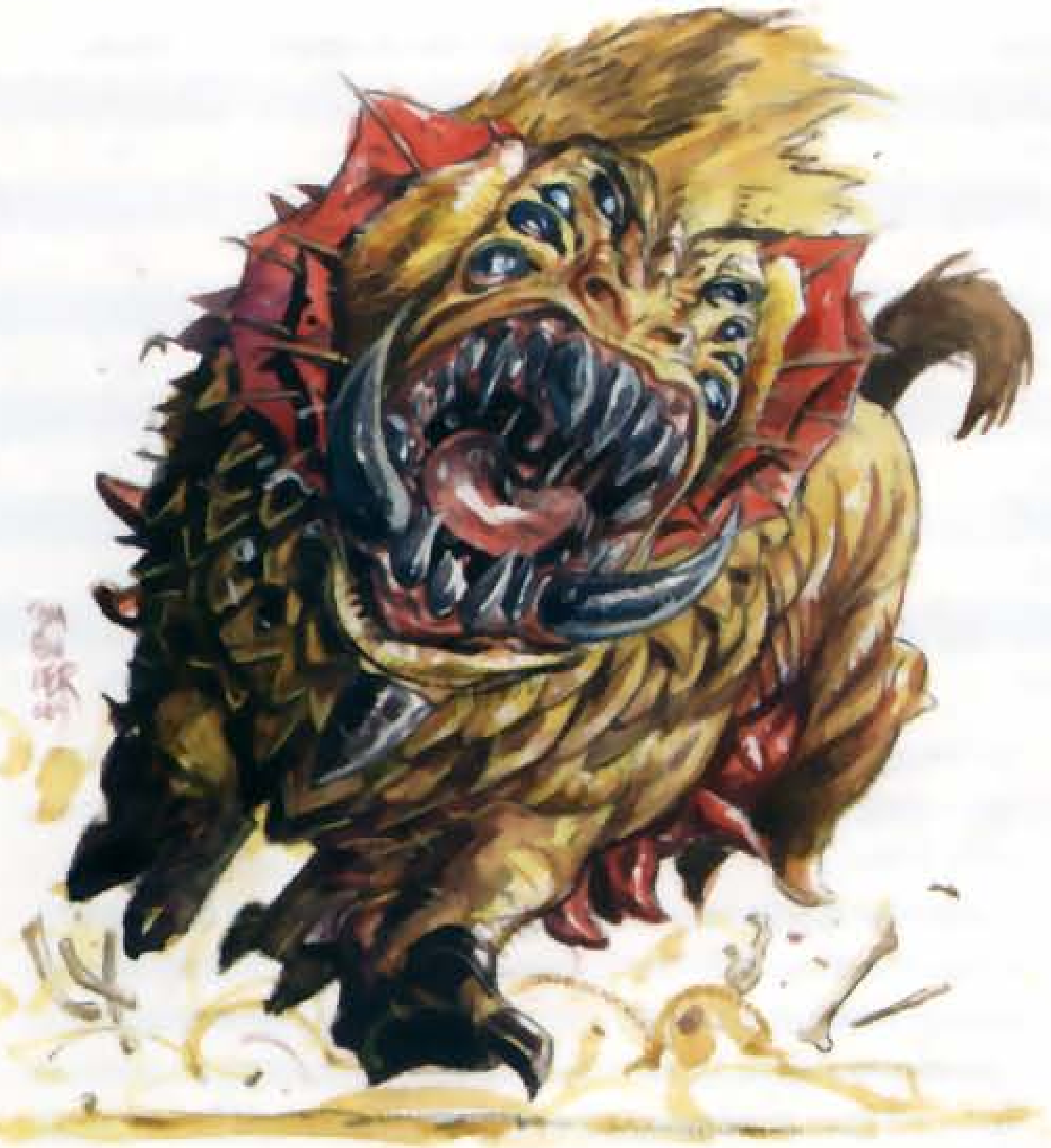
## Combat

The ramphor relies heavily on powerdives, charging unaware foes, then flying off. A cautious hunter, the ramphor rarely sticks around to tangle with a foe that survives its first attack.

**Skills**: Ramphors have a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks, because their vision is so keen.

# Sand Howler

Large Magical Beast
**Hit Dice**: 8d10+32 (76 hp)
**Initiative**: +0
**Speed**: 30 ft. (6 squares)
**Armor Class**: 17 (–1 size, +8 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 17
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +8/+20
**Attack**: Bite +15 melee (1d10+12)
**Full Attack**: Bite +15 melee (1d10+12) and 2 claws +15 melee (1d6+8)
**Space/Reach**: 10 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Paralyzing gaze
**Special Qualities**: Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision



**Saves**: Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +3
**Abilities**: Str 26, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 14
**Skills**: Listen +14, Spot +3
**Feats**: Alertness, Endurance, Power Attack
**Environment**: Warm desert
**Organization**: Solitary or herd (2–12)
**Challenge Rating**: 6
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 9–12 HD (Large); 13–24 HD (Huge)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This lizardlike quaduped has two lower tusks more than a foot long and eight purplish eyes. Its upper back is covered with scales, but its limbs and underside is tawny fur.*

The sand howler gets its name from the eerie yelps and howls it uses to communicate the location of prey to the rest of the pack. If more of its victims survived, they'd probably rename it for its paralytic gaze and massive jaws.

A typical sand howler is almost 10 feet long, 5 feet at the shoulder, and weighs 4,000 pounds.

### Combat

Sand howlers are territorial hunters. They rarely stray from ground they know well. They often challenge an intruder by standing atop a ridge or sand dune and howling. If the intruder approaches, he faces the sand howler's paralyzing gaze, and then a downhill charge from the angry beast.

**Paralyzing Gaze (Su)**: Paralyze foe for 1d4 rounds, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 16 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

## Sandknight

Small Elemental (Earth)
**Hit Dice**: 1d8+1 (5 hp)
**Initiative**: +1
**Speed**: 20 ft. (4 squares), burrow 20 ft.
**Armor Class**: 18 (+1 size, +6 natural, +1 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 17
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–1
**Attack**: Blood obsidian greatsword +4 melee (1d10+4)
**Full Attack**: Blood obsidian greatsword +4 melee (1d10+4)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: —
**Special Qualities**: Elemental traits
**Saves**: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0
**Abilities**: Str 17, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 6
**Skills**: Listen +4
**Feats**: Dodge
**Environment**: Elemental Plane of Earth
**Organization**: Solitary or squad (2–8)
**Challenge Rating**: 1
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 2–3 HD (Small)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*Composed entirely of sand and pebbles, this humanoid-shaped creature wields a massive sword made of glittering obsidian.*

Sandknights are the footsoldiers of the Elemental Plane of Earth, endlessly marching across its stony plains and through its underground tunnels. They make war on anyone they have a chance of defeating, heedless of the danger.

### Combat

Sandknights are unsubtle fighters. They simply charge their foes and attack with their swords.

**Using a Sandknight's Gear**: If summoned to the Material Plane, sandknights give up their swords only if their caster improves their attitude to friendly (they start out indifferent, so it's a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check). The sword disappears when the summoning spell ends, even if the sandknight was defeated before then.

## Spinewyrm

Dragon (Psionic)
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Wyrmling, very young, young, juvenile, or young adult: solitary or clutch (2–5); adult, mature adult, old, very old, ancient,wyrm, or great wyrm: solitary, pair, or family (1–2 and 2–5 offspring)
**Challenge Rating**: Wyrmling 2; very young 3; young 5; juvenile 8; young adult 9; adult 11; mature adult 13; old 15; very old 17; ancient 19; wyrm 20; great wyrm 22.
**Treasure**: Triple standard

**SPINEWYRMS BY AGE**

| Age | Size | HD (hp) | Str | Dex | Con | Int | Wis | Cha | Base Attack/Grapple | Attack |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wyrmling | T | 3d12 (19) | 13 | 10 | 11 | 8 | 13 | 10 | +3/−4 | +4 |
| Very young | S | 6d12 (39) | 17 | 12 | 11 | 8 | 13 | 10 | +6/+5 | +10 |
| Young | M | 9d12+9 (67) | 19 | 12 | 13 | 10 | 15 | 12 | +9/+13 | +13 |
| Juvenile | L | 12d12+24 (102) | 23 | 12 | 15 | 10 | 15 | 12 | +12/+22 | +17 |
| Young adult | L | 15d12+30 (127) | 25 | 14 | 15 | 12 | 17 | 14 | +15/+26 | +21 |
| Adult | L | 18d12+36 (153) | 27 | 14 | 15 | 12 | 17 | 14 | +18/+30 | +25 |
| Mature adult | H | 21d12+63 (199) | 27 | 14 | 17 | 14 | 19 | 16 | +21/+37 | +27 |
| Old | H | 24d12+72 (228) | 29 | 16 | 17 | 14 | 19 | 16 | +24/+41 | +31 |
| Very old | G | 27d12+108 (283) | 31 | 16 | 19 | 16 | 21 | 18 | +27/+49 | +33 |
| Ancient | G | 30d12+150 (345) | 33 | 16 | 21 | 16 | 21 | 18 | +30/+53 | +37 |
| Wyrm | G | 33d12+165 (379) | 35 | 18 | 21 | 18 | 23 | 20 | +33/+57 | +41 |
| Great wyrm | G | 36d12+216 (450) | 37 | 18 | 23 | 20 | 23 | 22 | +36/+61 | +45 |

**Alignment**: Usually neutral evil

**Advancement**: Wyrmling 4–5 HD; very young 7–8 HD; young 10–11 HD; juvenile 13–14 HD; young adult 16–17 HD; adult 19–20 HD; mature adult 22–23 HD; old 25–26 HD; very old 28–29 HD; ancient 31–32 HD; wyrm 34–35 HD; great wyrm 37+ HD

**Level Adjustment**: Wyrmling +3; very young +4, young +5, juvenile +5, others —

*This sinuous giant snake slithers across the sky, the many spines on its chitinous, segmented shell whistling as they slice through the wind.*

The spinewyrm is the closest thing Athas has to a traditional D&D dragon. It has no breath weapon—or wings or legs for that matter—but it has dangerous melee attacks and psionic powers.

Spinewyrms float high in the skies over Athas, swooping down when they see a tasty meal or something else that strikes their fancy. They keep their lairs atop forbidding rock outcroppings, slippery sand dunes, or other hard-to-reach places.

## Combat

Before a fight begins, a spinewyrm uses its psionic powers to make itself stronger and to learn more about its adversaries. It then dives into battle, trying to constrict and use its natural weapons. Larger spinewyrms constrict particularly tenacious foes and fly hundreds of feet into the air before dropping them.

Because a spinewyrm has no claws or wings, its full attack action functions differently than most dragons. A spinewyrm's primary attack is a bite with its massive, powerful jaws. Spinewyrms gain Improved Natural Attack (bite) as a bonus feat, and thus the damage they inflict is increased by one step, as if it were one size category larger than the damage indicated for a dragon's bite on page 69 of the *Monster Manual*. Spinewyrms always apply 1.5 times their Strength bonus to damage done with their bite, even when they make a full attack action. Spinewyrms have a secondary attack—lashing with the spines that cover their long, snake-like bodies. As spinewyrms grow larger, they can make more attacks with their spines. The number of attacks they can make with a full attack action and the damage inflicted is listed on the table, and includes one-half the spinewyrm's Strength bonus.

**Detachable Spines (Ex)**: An opponent hit by a spinewyrm's spine (whether in melee, during a grapple, or during a spine volley) must succeed on a Reflex save or have the spine break off in his or her flesh. A lodged spine imposes a −1 penalty on attacks, saves, and checks; penalties for multiple spines stack. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

**SPINEWYRM ABILITIES BY AGE**

| Age | Speed | Initiative | AC | Special Abilities | Manifester Level | SR/PR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wyrmling | 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect) | +0 | 14 (+2 size, +2 natural) | — | — | — |
| Very young | 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect) | +1 | 17 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural) | — | — | — |
| Young | 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (perfect) | +1 | 19 (+1 Dex, +8 natural) | — | — | — |
| Juvenile | 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (perfect) | +1 | 21 (−1 size, +1 Dex, +11 natural) | — | — | 16 |
| Young adult | 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (perfect) | +2 | 25 (−1 size, +2 Dex, +14 natural) | Damage reduction 5/magic | 1st | 18 |
| Adult | 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (perfect) | +2 | 28 (−1 size, +2 Dex, +17 natural) | — | 3rd | 20 |
| Mature adult | 40 ft., fly 120 ft. (perfect) | +2 | 30 (−2 size, +2 Dex, +20 natural) | Damage reduction 10/magic | 5th | 22 |
| Old | 40 ft., fly 120 ft. (perfect) | +3 | 34 (−2 size, +3 Dex, +23 natural) | — | 7th | 25 |
| Very old | 40 ft., fly 120 ft. (perfect) | +3 | 35 (−4 size, +3 Dex, +26 natural) | Damage reduction 15/magic | 9th | 27 |
| Ancient | 40 ft., fly 120 ft. (perfect) | +3 | 38 (−4 size, +3 Dex, +29 natural) | — | 11th | 28 |
| Wyrm | 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (perfect) | +4 | 42 (−4 size, +4 Dex, +32 natural) | Damage reduction 20/magic | 13th | 29 |
| Great wyrm | 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (perfect) | +4 | 45 (−4 size, +4 Dex, +35 natural) | — | 15th | 31 |

| Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Spine Attacks | Spine Damage | Spine Save | Impale Damage | Frightful Presence DC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| +3 | +3 | +4 | 1 | 1d3 | DC 11 | 2d3 | — |
| +5 | +6 | +6 | 1 | 1d4+1 | DC 14 | 2d4+2 | — |
| +7 | +7 | +8 | 2 | 1d6+2 | DC 15 | 2d6+4 | — |
| +10 | +9 | +10 | 2 | 1d8+3 | DC 17 | 2d8+6 | — |
| +11 | +11 | +12 | 3 | 1d8+3 | DC 19 | 2d8+7 | DC 19 |
| +13 | +13 | +14 | 3 | 1d8+4 | DC 21 | 2d8+7 | DC 21 |
| +15 | +14 | +16 | 4 | 2d6+4 | DC 22 | 4d6+8 | DC 23 |
| +17 | +17 | +18 | 4 | 2d6+4 | DC 25 | 4d6+8 | DC 25 |
| +19 | +18 | +20 | 4 | 2d8+5 | DC 26 | 4d8+10 | DC 27 |
| +22 | +20 | +22 | 5 | 2d8+5 | DC 28 | 4d8+11 | DC 29 |
| +23 | +22 | +24 | 5 | 2d8+6 | DC 30 | 4d8+12 | DC 31 |
| +26 | +24 | +26 | 6 | 2d8+6 | DC 32 | 4d8+13 | DC 34 |

A spine can be removed safely with a DC 20 Heal check as a standard action; otherwise, removing a spine deals 1d6 points of damage.

**Improved Grab (Ex)**: To use this ability, a spinewyrm must hit a creature one size smaller than itself with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to impale the opponent on its spined body.

**Impale (Ex)**: A spinewyrm deals the damage listed in the spinewyrm table with a successful grapple check. The spinewyrm's foe must also make a Reflex save or have a spine embedded in his or her flesh.

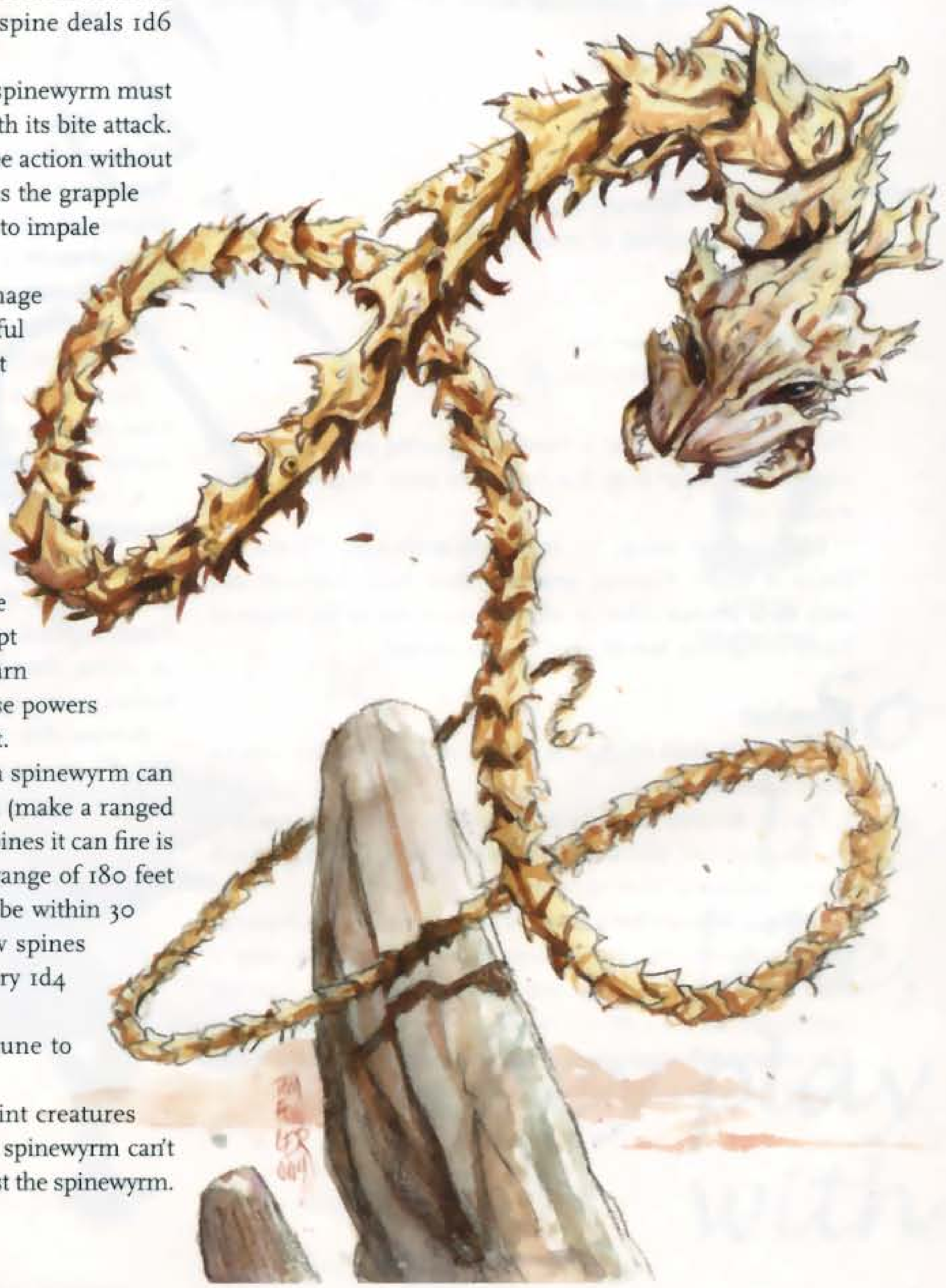
**Powerful Bite (Ex)**: All spinewyrms gain Improved Natural Attack (bite) as a bonus feat.

**Psionics (Sp)**: A spinewyrm knows and manifests psionic powers as a psion of the level indicated in the spinewyrm table, except that it uses Charisma to set save DCs and earn bonus power points. Spinewyrms can choose powers from the psion/wilder list and the egoist list.

**Spine Volley (Ex)**: With a snap of its tail, a spinewyrm can loose a volley of spines as a standard action (make a ranged attack roll for each spine). The number of spines it can fire is equal to its age category. This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. The creature grows new spines quickly, and it can use this attack once every 1d4 rounds as a result.

**Immunities (Ex)**: A spinewyrm is immune to sleep and paralysis effects.

**Blindsense (Ex)**: Spinewyrms can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents the spinewyrm can't actually see still have total concealment against the spinewyrm.



**Keen Senses (Ex)**: A spinewyrm sees four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light.

## Wavearcher

Small Elemental (Water)
**Hit Dice**: 1d8+1 (5 hp)
**Initiative**: +2
**Speed**: 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 30 ft.
**Armor Class**: 13 (+1 size, +2 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 11
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–2
**Attack**: Composite longbow +3 ranged (1d6+2)
**Full Attack**: Composite longbow +3 ranged (1d6+2)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: —
**Special Qualities**: Elemental traits, fast healing 5, create arrows
**Saves**: Fort +3, Ref +2, Will –1
**Abilities**: Str 15, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8
**Skills**: Listen +3
**Feats**: Point-Blank Shot
**Environment**: Elemental Plane of Water
**Organization**: Solitary or squad (2–8)
**Challenge Rating**: 1
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 2–3 HD (Small)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This liquid creature has a humanoid-shaped torso, head, and arms, but its lower body is a foamy sea wave. It carries a bow made of coral.*

Wavearchers range far and wide across the Elemental Plane of Water, hunting anything they think they can slay with their arrows. They're often summoned to the Material Plane to fight on behalf of elemental clerics.

### Combat

Wavearchers don't engage in melee, and instead fire arrows from a distance.

**Create Arrows (Su)**: As a free action once per round, a wavearcher can pluck an iron arrow from its body. Such arrows disappear after 10 rounds.

**Using a Wavearcher's Gear**: If summoned to the Material Plane, wavearchers give up their longbow or arrows only if their caster improves their attitude to friendly (they start out indifferent, so it's a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check). The longbow disappears when the summoning spell ends, even if the wavearcher was defeated before then.

## Z'Tal

Small Animal
**Hit Dice**: 1d8+2 (6 hp)
**Initiative**: +2
**Speed**: 30 ft. (6 squares)
**Armor Class**: 15 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–2
**Attack**: Scales +4 melee (1d4)
**Full Attack**: Scales +4 melee (1d4)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Scream
**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision
**Saves**: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1
**Abilities**: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
**Skills**: Jump +10, Listen +3, Spot +3
**Feats**: Endurance
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary, pair, or leap (5–20)
**Challenge Rating**: 1/2
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 2 HD (Small)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This small, brown lizard hops up and down on its hind legs, its glossy scales shining in the sun.*

The z'tal is a desert lizard known for its proclivity to hop from place to place and for the alarming scream it uses to disable predators.

A z'tal is about 2 feet tall and weighs from 5 to 8 pounds.

### Combat

An herbivore, the z'tal only fights when it must. When confronted by one of the desert's many predators, a z'tal shrieks an alarm, then hops away. If cornered, the z'tal attacks by lashing its sharp-edged scales against a foe.

**Scream (Ex)**: Any creature other than other z'tals within 10 feet of a screaming z'tal must succeed at a DC 10 Will save or suffer a –2 penalty to skill checks for one minute. Those who save against the z'tal's scream are immune to further z'tal screams for the rest of the day.

**Skills**: Z'tals have a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks. Ω

DARK SUN

Part Two

# Dark Sun Monsters

**Written by David Noonan  Art by Tom Fowler**

Last issue's *POLYHEDRON* section presented DARK SUN, a D&D campaign set on the blasted desert world of Athas, where life is cheap and each sandstorm brings the promise of sightless death. The campaign setting first appeared just over a decade ago, and last issue's *DM's Guide to DARK SUN* featured several new and familiar creatures from the world of Athas. We didn't quite have room to cover every monster we wanted to, however, which is where this addendum comes in. While these creatures are suitable for any D&D campaign, to make the most of them you'll want a copy of *DUNGEON* #110 and the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

## Monster Types

Because psionics are so prevalent on Athas, animals can have psionic powers, so long as the powers aren't central to their threat as monsters. If an animal relies on psionics to survive in the world, build it as a magical beast, not an animal.

Mammals are very rare on Athas (beyond many of the PC races), so most animals found in the *Monster Manual* don't exist in a DARK SUN game. Only snakes and vermin will be familiar to your players. Most of the fauna that surrounds them should seem dangerous and alien. DARK SUN monsters look alien enough that it's sometimes hard to tell what creature type they are at a glance. A kank, for example, looks like a giant ant, but it's actually an animal and hence trainable as a mount.

## Belgoi

Medium Humanoid (Belgoi) (Psionic)

**Hit Dice**: 4d8 (18 hp)

**Initiative**: +1

**Speed**: 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Armor Class**: 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 12

**Base Attack/Grapple**: +3/+4

**Attack**: Claw +4 melee (1d4+1 plus 1d3 Con)

**Full Attack**: 2 claws +4 melee (1d4+1 plus 1d3 Con)

**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks**: Psi-like abilities, Constitution drain

**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision

**Saves**: Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +3

**Abilities**: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 13

**Skills**: Hide +5, Move Silently +5, Survival +5.

**Feats**: Stealthy, Track

**Environment**: Warm desert

**Organization**: Gang (4–9), tribe (10–40 plus 50% noncombatants and 1 4th-level leader and 1d3 2nd-level sergeants and 1d6 inixes or 1d6 kanks).

**Challenge Rating**: 2

**Treasure**: Standard

**Alignment**: Usually lawful evil

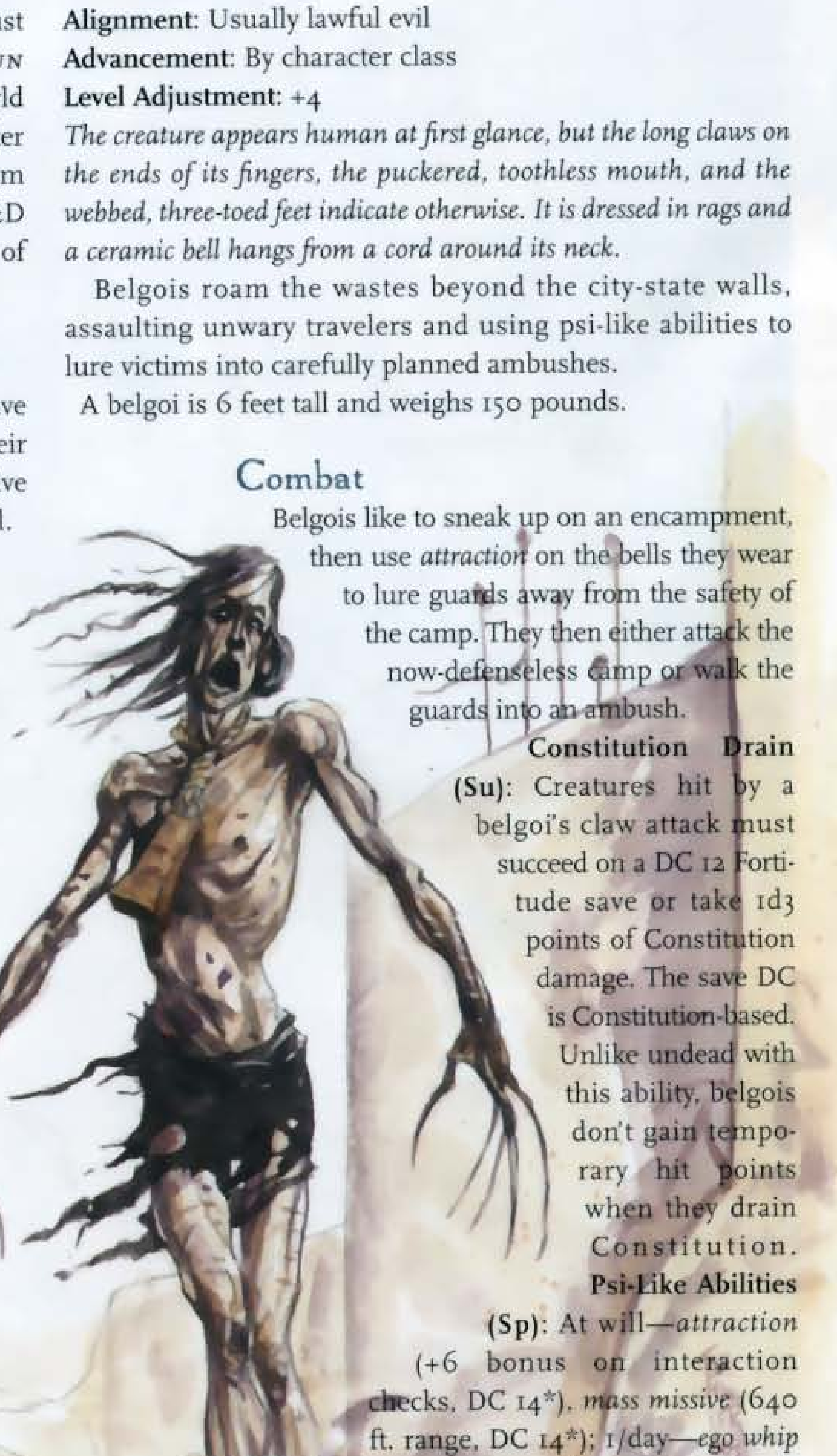
**Advancement**: By character class

**Level Adjustment**: +4

*The creature appears human at first glance, but the long claws on the ends of its fingers, the puckered, toothless mouth, and the webbed, three-toed feet indicate otherwise. It is dressed in rags and a ceramic bell hangs from a cord around its neck.*

Belgois roam the wastes beyond the city-state walls, assaulting unwary travelers and using psi-like abilities to lure victims into carefully planned ambushes.

A belgoi is 6 feet tall and weighs 150 pounds.



### Combat

Belgois like to sneak up on an encampment, then use *attraction* on the bells they wear to lure guards away from the safety of the camp. They then either attack the now-defenseless camp or walk the guards into an ambush.

**Constitution Drain (Su)**: Creatures hit by a belgoi's claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or take 1d3 points of Constitution damage. The save DC is Constitution-based. Unlike undead with this ability, belgois don't gain temporary hit points when they drain Constitution.

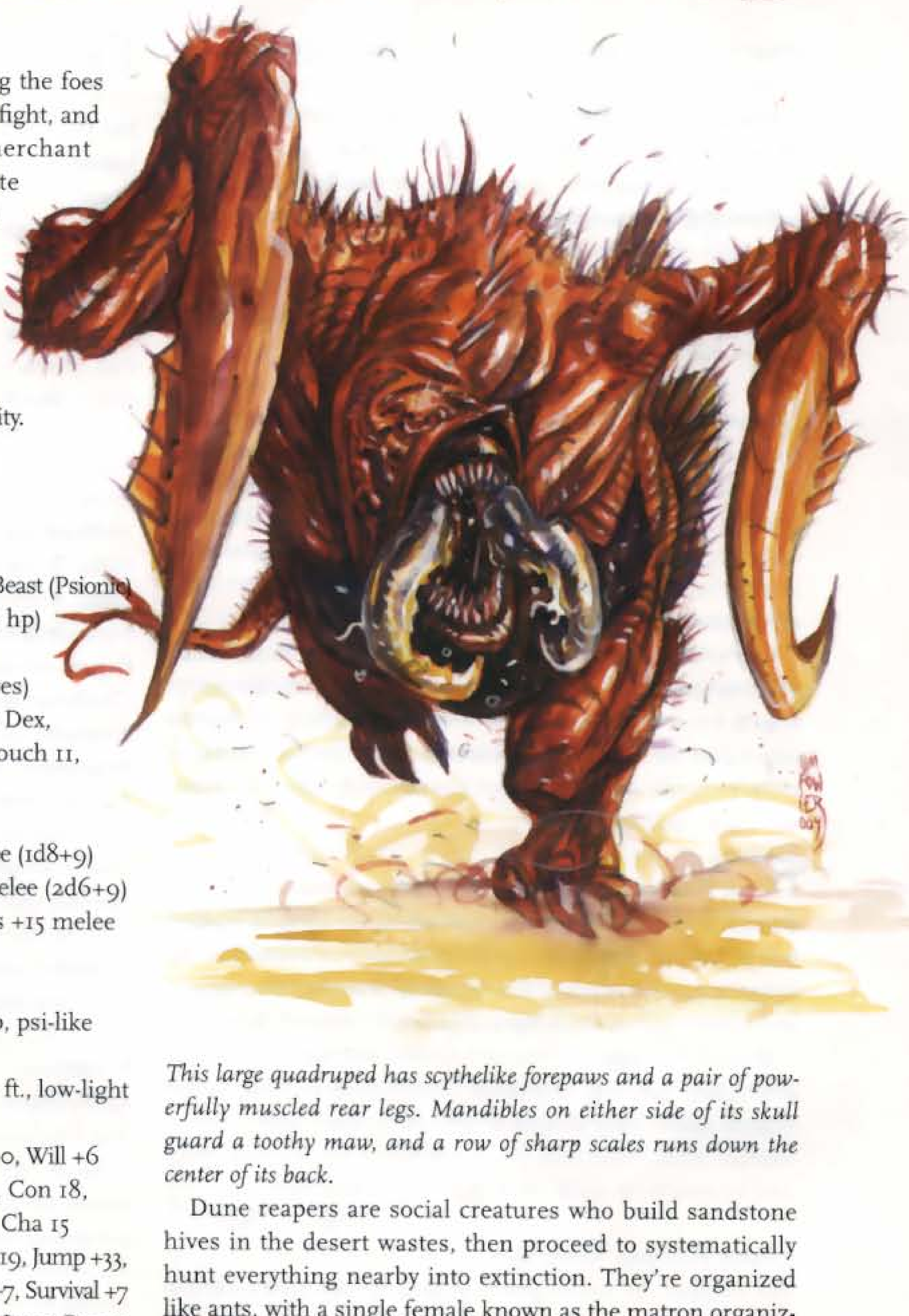
**Psi-Like Abilities (Sp)**: At will—*attraction* (+6 bonus on interaction checks, DC 14*), *mass missive* (640 ft. range, DC 14*); 1/day—*ego whip* (DC 13), *psionic blast* (DC 14). Manifester level 5th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

*Includes augmentation for the belgoi's manifester level.

## Belgoi Society

Belgois eke out their meager survival by eating the foes they ambush. They have no stomach for a fair fight, and the entire tribe usually moves on when merchant patrols or soldiers from a nearby city-state threaten them. They are nomadic and don't keep anything they can't carry.

Because belgois are such notorious raiders of small villages and trade caravans, they're usually attacked on sight by armies and militias that guard smaller settlements. No dragon-king tolerates a belgoi tribe within five days travel of his city.



# Dune Reaper

| | **Drone** | **Warrior** |
|---|---|---|
| | Large Magical Beast | Large Magical Beast (Psionic) |
| **Hit Dice**: | 8d10+24 (68 hp) | 12d10+48 (114 hp) |
| **Initiative**: | +2 | +2 |
| **Speed**: | 40 ft. (8 squares) | 40 ft. (8 squares) |
| **Armor Class**: | 17 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15 | 23 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +12 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 21 |
| **Base Attack/Grapple**: | +8/+19 | +12/+23 |
| **Attack**: | Claw +15 melee (1d8+7) | Claw +20 melee (1d8+9) |
| **Full Attack**: | 2 claws +15 melee (1d8+7) and mandibles +10 melee (1d8+3) | 2 claws +20 melee (2d6+9) and mandibles +15 melee (1d8+4) |
| **Space/Reach**: | 10 ft./5 ft. | 10 ft./5 ft. |
| **Special Attacks**: | Improved grab, rend | Improved grab, psi-like abilities, rend |
| **Special Qualities**: | Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent | Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent |
| **Saves**: | Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +3 | Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +6 |
| **Abilities**: | Str 24, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 1, Wis 13, Cha 11 | Str 28, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 15 |
| **Skills**: | Jump +16, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +4 | Concentration +19, Jump +33, Listen +7, Spot +7, Survival +7 |
| **Feats**: | Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw) | Cleave, Mental Leap, Power Attack, Power Specialization, Weapon Focus (ray) |
| **Environment**: | Warm desert | Warm desert |
| **Organization**: | Solitary, Pack (1 warrior and 1d4+1 drones) or hive (1d4 warriors and 4d4+4 drones plus one 1 18-HD warrior matron) | Solitary, Pack (1 warrior and 1d4+1 drones) or hive (1d4 warriors and 4d4+4 drones plus one 1 18-HD warrior matron) |
| **Challenge Rating**: | 5 | 9 |
| **Treasure**: | — | — |
| **Alignment**: | Always neutral | Always neutral |
| **Advancement**: | 9–12 HD (Large), 13–24 HD (Huge) | 13–17 HD (Large); 18–36 HD (Huge) |

*This large quadruped has scythelike forepaws and a pair of powerfully muscled rear legs. Mandibles on either side of its skull guard a toothy maw, and a row of sharp scales runs down the center of its back.*

Dune reapers are social creatures who build sandstone hives in the desert wastes, then proceed to systematically hunt everything nearby into extinction. They're organized like ants, with a single female known as the matron organizing teams of warriors and drones to do her bidding.

While the drones and warriors look the same, they function quite differently. The drones have limited intellects and are little more than animals, but the warriors are as smart as humans and have psionic powers. No matter what their caste, dune reapers have fearsome bladelike forelimbs that can tear through armor and flesh with ease.

Drones and warriors are 6 feet tall at the shoulder and weigh 3,000 pounds.

## Combat

Dune reapers prefer to lie in wait for their foes, hiding behind or atop sand dunes until their prey draws near. Once a fight starts, they're straightforward combatants, but they're smart enough to use basic tactics like flanking and concentrating on wounded enemies.

**Improved Grab (Ex)**: To use this ability, a dune reaper must hit with its mandible attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

**Rend (Ex)**: A dune reaper that establishes a hold with a successful grapple check latches onto the opponents's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals 2d8+10 points of damage.

**Skills**: Dune reapers have a +5 racial bonus on Jump checks due to their powerful leg muscles.

## Dune Reaper Society

Dune reapers are omnivores, eating nearly anything they come into contact with. Not only do they use their meals for sustenance, but as raw material for the adhesive saliva that dune reaper drones secrete. Dune reapers use this secretion to bind sand and pulverize gravel, which they then sculpt into elaborate multichamber lairs of sandstone.

Captured dune reavers are common sights in Athasian gladiator arenas, because they go often go berserk when separated from their prides. They make terrifying, ferocious opponents for humanoid gladiators. Dune reaver forelimbs are sometimes made into bone swords, and their scaly hides are often made into armor.

## Dune Reaper Drones

Drones comprise about two-thirds of all dune reapers. What they lack in intellect they make up for in perseverance and ferocity. Drones can smell which of their fellow dune reapers are warriors, and receive orders from them in a subtle olfactory language.

Drones are aggressive, territorial combatants that use ambushes, flanking, and other rudimentary combat tactics to good effect. They cooperate with each other better when a warrior leads them into battle—without the warrior, their attacks tend to be unfocused, but no less ferocious.

## Dune Reaper Warriors

The warriors are the sergeants of dune reaper society, directing teams of drones as they hunt and build their warrens. All warriors are females, but only the largest one in a hive, known as the matron, can lay eggs for the drones to fertilize.

Warriors are almost always accompanied by one or more dune reaper drones. Using olfactory cues, the warrior directs the drones to charge the dune reapers' adversaries while the warrior uses its *energy push* and *mind thrust*. Then the warrior enters the fray itself. If battle turns against it, the warrior uses *mass cloud mind* to escape and report back to the matron and the rest of the hive.

**Psi-Like Abilities (Sp)**: At will—*missive, read thoughts* (DC 14); 3/day—*energy push* (6d6, DC 18); 1/day—*mass cloud mind* (DC 18), *mind thrust* (11d10, DC 18*). Manifester level 11th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

* Includes augmentation for the warrior's manifester level.

# Earthdelver

Small Elemental (Earth)
**Hit Dice**: 1d8+2 (6 hp)
**Initiative**: +2
**Speed**: 20 ft. (2 squares), burrow 20 ft.
**Armor Class**: 17 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 15
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–4
**Attack**: Claw +3 melee (1d2)
**Full Attack**: 2 claws +3 melee (1d2) and bite –2 melee (1d3)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Earth mastery
**Special Qualities**: Earth glide, elemental traits
**Saves**: Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1
**Abilities**: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
**Skills**: Escape Artist +6, Listen +3, Spot +3
**Feats**: Alertness, Weapon Finesse$^B$
**Environment**: Elemental Plane of Earth
**Organization**: Solitary
**Challenge Rating**: 1/2
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: —
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This small quadruped has claws and a snout made of blackest obsidian and a body aggregated from pebbles.*

Elemental clerics of earth often summon earthdelvers to do their bidding on the Material Plane.

An earthdelver is 3 feet long and weighs 35 pounds.

## Combat

Earthdelvers tend to focus on a single foe, attacking with claws and bites until it's dead. They're heedless of their own safety.

**Earth Mastery (Ex)**: An earthdelver gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its foe are touching the ground. If an opponent is airborne, the earthdelver takes a –4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.)

**Earth Glide (Ex)**: An earthdelver can glide through stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other signs of its presence. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing earthdelver flings the earthdelver back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

## Erdlu

Medium Animal
**Hit Dice**: 3d8+6 (19 hp)
**Initiative**: +4
**Speed**: 50 ft. (10 squares)
**Armor Class**: 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +2/+4
**Attack**: Beak +4 melee (1d6+2)
**Full Attack**: Beak +4 melee (1d6+2) and 1 claw –1 melee (1d4+1)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: —
**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision, sprint
**Saves**: Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +4
**Abilities**: Str 14, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 4
**Skills**: Listen +11, Spot +11
**Feats**: Alertness, Endurance
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary, pack (2–5), or herd (6–30)
**Challenge Rating**: 2
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 4–5 HD (Medium)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This big, flightless bird has scaly skin and armor plates on its nonfunctional wings. It has a sharp beak and two powerful legs ending in claws.*

Erdlus are prized for their skin, their meat, and their ability to lay eggs that provide a day's worth of nutrients and water. In the wild, they congregate in vast herds that use speed and dispersion to avoid predators.

An adult erdlu is 7 feet tall and weighs 200 pounds.

### Combat

Herbivores that subsist on a wide array of plant life, erdlus would rather run than fight. When faced with a predator, erdlu herds scatter, running in different directions and reuniting only when the danger is past. If cornered, erdlus strike with their beaks and kick with a clawed foot, always seeking to open a path to escape.

**Sprint (Ex)**: Once per hour, an erdlu can move ten times its normal speed (500 feet) for one round. Most erdlus use this ability to escape a combat situation.

## Firesnake

Small Elemental (Fire)
**Hit Dice**: 1d8 (4 hp)
**Initiative**: +2
**Speed**: 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft.
**Armor Class**: 16 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 14
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–5
**Attack**: Bite +3 melee (1d3–1)
**Full Attack**: Bite +3 melee (1d3–1)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Burn
**Special Qualities**: Elemental traits, provides shadowy illumination
**Saves**: Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +1
**Abilities**: Str 8, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2
**Skills**: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +6, Listen +6, Spot +6
**Feats**: Dodge, Weapon Finesse$^B$
**Environment**: Elemental Plane of Fire
**Organization**: Solitary
**Challenge Rating**: 1/2
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: —
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This snake appears to be made of living flame and glows with a reddish light.*

Firesnakes, natives of the Elemental Plane of Fire, are commonly summoned by elemental clerics.

A firesnake is 3 feet long and weighs 10 pounds.

### Combat

Firesnake bites don't do much damage directly, but they sometimes light the target on fire.

**Burn (Ex)**: Those bitten by a firesnake must succeed at a DC 10 Reflex save or catch fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds, as described in the Catching on Fire section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (page 303).

**Skills**: Firesnakes have a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. They use their Dexterity modifier for Climb checks.

## Fordorran

Large Magical Beast (Psionic)
**Hit Dice**: 6d10+18 (51 hp)
**Initiative**: +0
**Speed**: 30 ft. (6 squares)
**Armor Class**: 17 (–1 size, +8 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 17
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +5/+17
**Attack**: Claw +8 melee (1d8+4)
**Full Attack**: 2 claws +8 melee (1d6+4) and gore +3 melee (1d8+2)
**Space/Reach**: 10 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Psi-like abilities, stench
**Special Qualities**: Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision
**Saves**: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +3
**Abilities**: Str 18, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 13
**Skills**: Listen +4, Spot +7
**Feats**: Ability Focus (stench), Combat Manifestation, Multiattack

**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary or pair
**Challenge Rating**: 4
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 7–10 HD (Large)
**Level Adjustment**: —

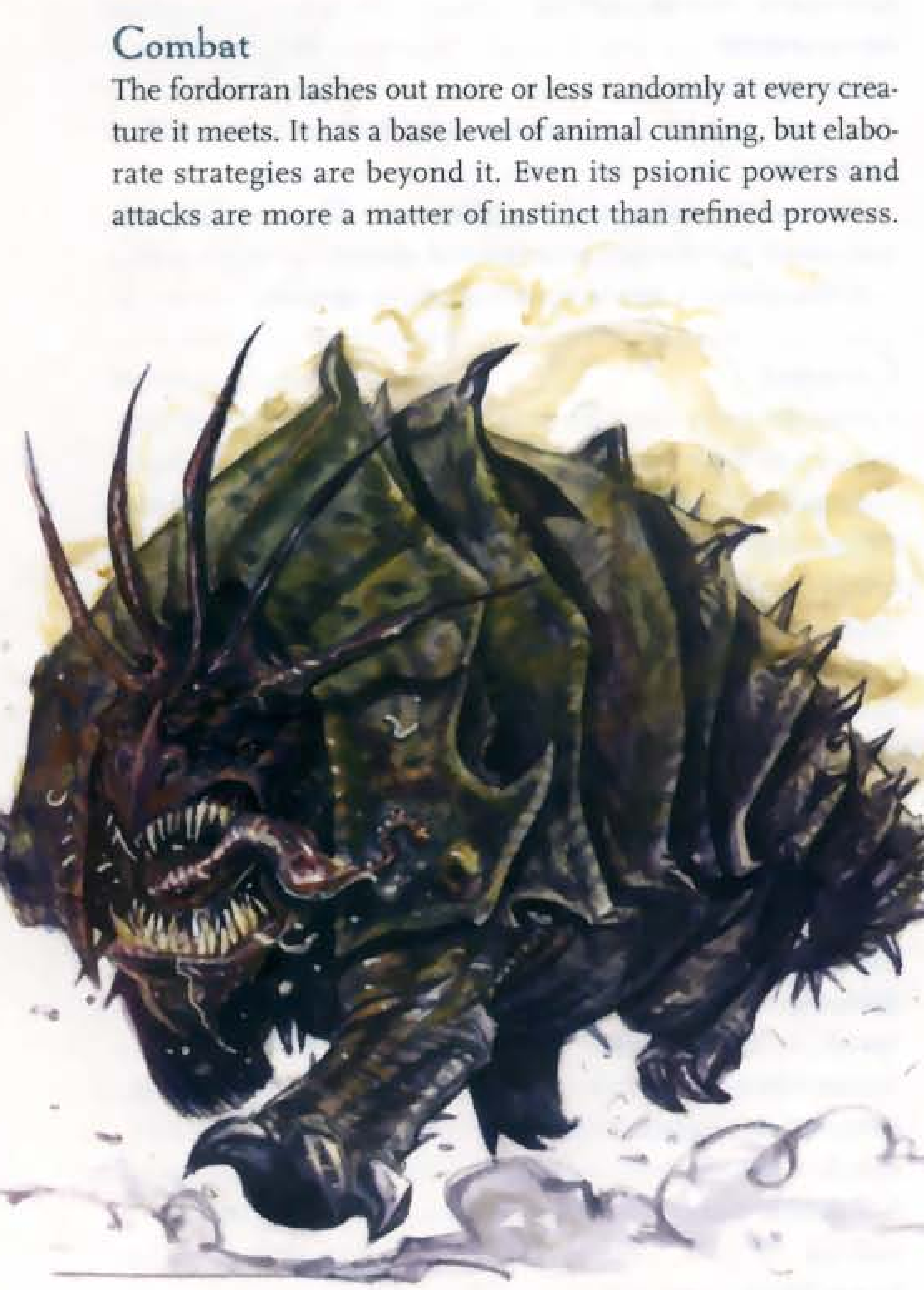
*This massive, gray-green quadruped is covered in armor plating from its stubby tail to its horned head. It exudes a foul odor.*

The fordorran is a marauding beast that attacks and consumes anything in its path. It'll start a fight even if it isn't hungry because its instinct to fight is so strong.

A fordorran is 8 feet long and 5 feet high at the shoulder. It weighs 1,800 pounds.

### Combat

The fordorran lashes out more or less randomly at every creature it meets. It has a base level of animal cunning, but elaborate strategies are beyond it. Even its psionic powers and attacks are more a matter of instinct than refined prowess.



**Psi-Like Abilities (Sp)**: 3/day—*dissipating touch*, *energy burst* (DC 14), *id insinuation* (DC 13). Manifester level 6th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

**Stench (Ex)**: The fordorran continually produces a foul-smelling odor as its digests its varied diet. Any living creature (even another fordorran) within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or be sickened for as long as it remains in the affected area and for 1d4 rounds afterward. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same fordorran's stench for 24 hours. *Delay poison* or *neutralize poison* removes the sickened condition from one creature. Creatures that have immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on saving throws against this effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

## Gaj

Large Aberration (Psionic)
**Hit Dice**: 11d8+77 (126 hp)
**Initiative**: +0
**Speed**: 20 ft. (4 squares)
**Armor Class**: 26 (–1 size, +17 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 24
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +8/+21
**Attack**: Mandibles +16 melee (2d6+13)
**Full Attack**: Mandibles +16 melee (2d6+13)
**Space/Reach**: 10 ft./10 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Psi-like abilities, improved grab, probe drain
**Special Qualities**: Psionic resistance 22, low-light vision
**Saves**: Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +14
**Abilities**: Str 28, Dex 11, Con 25, Int 14, Wis 21, Cha 20
**Skills**: Concentration +21, Intimidate +12, Psicraft +16, Spot +22, Survival +19
**Feats**: Focused Sunder, Iron Will$^{B}$, Power Attack, Psionic Fist, Improved Sunder
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary or pair
**Challenge Rating**: 11
**Treasure**: Double standard
**Alignment**: Usually neutral evil
**Advancement**: 12–18 HD (Medium); 19–33 HD (Huge)

*This strange cross between a reptile and a giant beetle has a spongy white globe for a head, with six compound eyes and a pair of barbed mandibles as thick as a man's arms. Three feathery antennae wave from atop its head.*

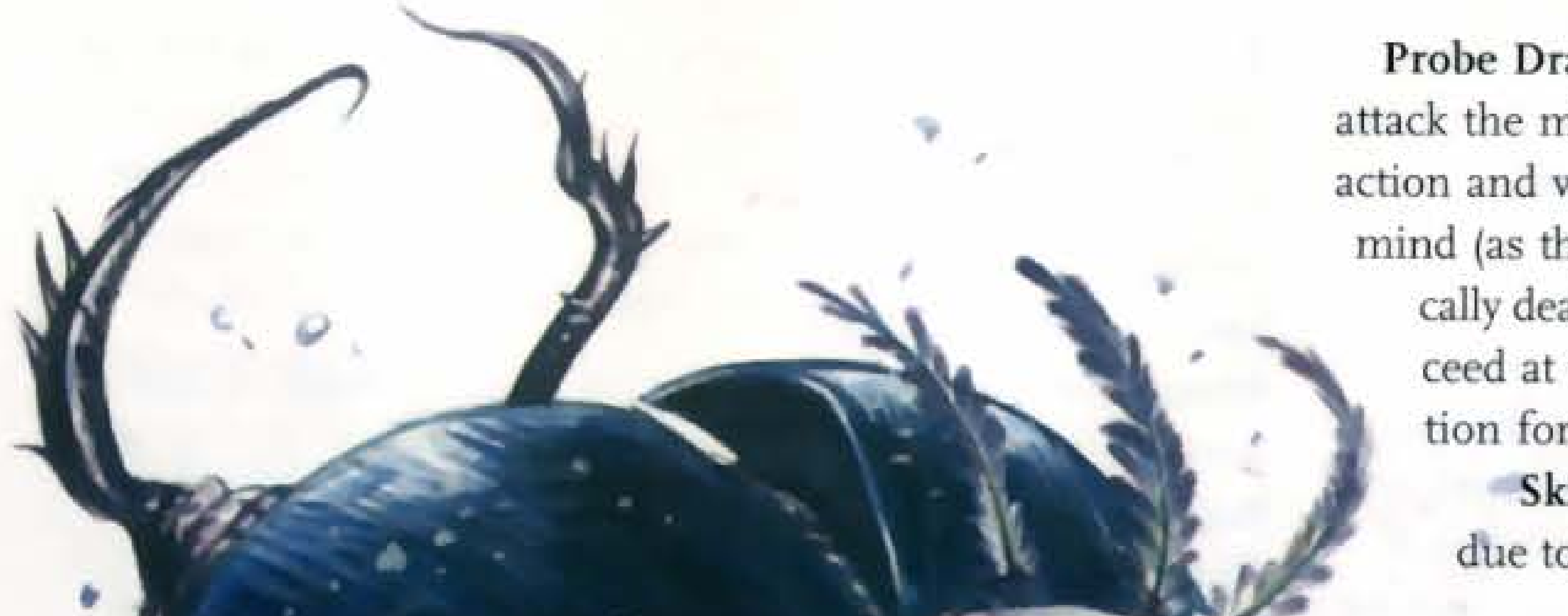
The psionic horror known as the gaj is among the most dangerous predators of the deserts, because they hunt only intelligent foes. They draw sustenance both from their victims' corpses and the psionic agony they produce when they die.

A gaj is 10 feet long and weighs from 400 to 600 pounds.

### Combat

The gaj uses its array of psionic attacks first, preferably from a distance, then moves into melee to consume any incapacitated foes. In melee, it tries to sunder the weapons of those who attack it, and it takes great joy in draining their intelligence while tearing them apart with its mandibles.

At the beginning of a fight, the gaj has its psionic focus. It prefers to expend its psionic focus during a sunder attack.



Gajs are confident creatures, and they sometimes play with their food when they don't think they're in danger. Even in the middle of combat, some gajs grapple foes and use their *power leech* psi-like ability or probe drain special ability to gain power or learn more about their foes. Gajs aren't stupid and deal with dangerous enemies before playing with their food.

**Psi-Like Abilities (Sp)**: At will—*detect psionics, id insinuation* (5 targets, DC 21*), *mindlink, read thoughts* (DC 17), *power leech* (DC 19), *psionic blast* (4 rounds, DC 18); 3/day—*psionic dominate* (can affect aberrations, animals, dragons, elementals, fey, giants, humanoids, magical beasts, monstrous humanoids, or outsiders, DC 21*), *psychic crush* (4d6 damage on a successful save, DC 20*). Manifester level 11th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

*Includes augmentation for the gaj's manifester level.

**Improved Grab (Ex)**: To use this ability, a gaj must hit a Medium or smaller creature with its mandibles. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can automatically make a probe drain attack.

**Probe Drain (Su)**: A gaj can use its feathery antennae to attack the mind of grappled victims. If a gaj takes an attack action and wins a grapple check, it can probe its adversary's mind (as the *mind probe* power, DC 20), and then automatically deal 1d4 points of Wisdom drain. Creatures who succeed at their Will saves resist the gaj's mental interrogation for a round, but they still take the Wisdom drain.

**Skills**: Gajs have a +10 racial bonus on Spot checks due to their multiple keen eyes.

## Gaj Society

Gajs are solitary hunters who only congregate in Highsun for breeding purposes. They make their lairs in rocky areas or sandy burrows, and there they keep the treasure they've accumulated from previous meals.

# Jhakar

Medium Animal

**Hit Dice**: 3d8+15 (28 hp)

**Initiative**: +2

**Speed**: 40 ft. (8 squares)

**Armor Class**: 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15

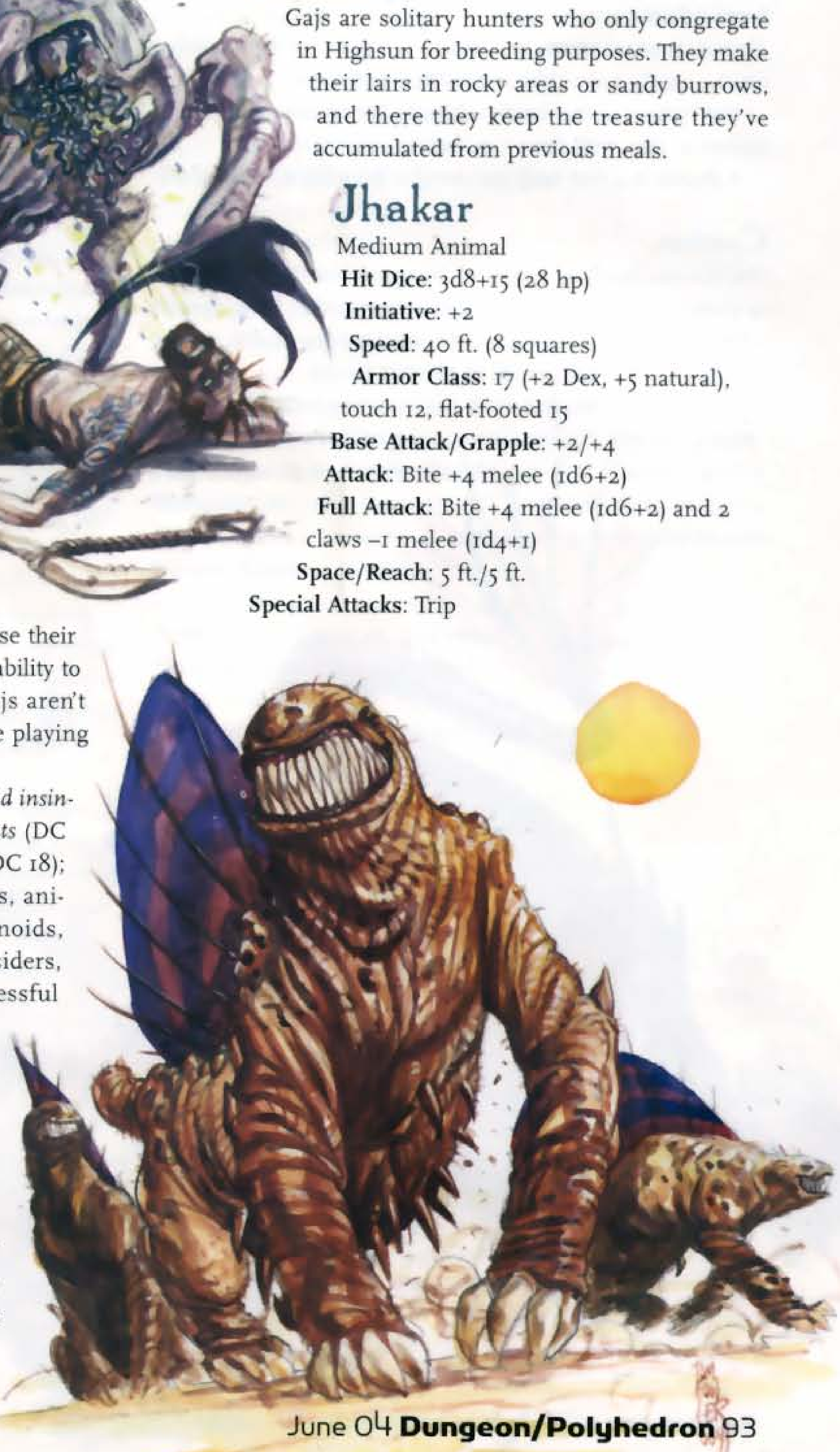
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +2/+4

**Attack**: Bite +4 melee (1d6+2)

**Full Attack**: Bite +4 melee (1d6+2) and 2 claws –1 melee (1d4+1)

**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks**: Trip



**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision, scent
**Saves**: Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2
**Abilities**: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
**Skills**: Listen +6, Spot +6
**Feats**: Alertness, Toughness, Track[B]
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary or pack (2–8)
**Challenge Rating**: 3
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 4–5 HD (Large)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This squat lizard has wicked claws, a purple sailback fin running down its back, and a wide mouth that seems to grin.*

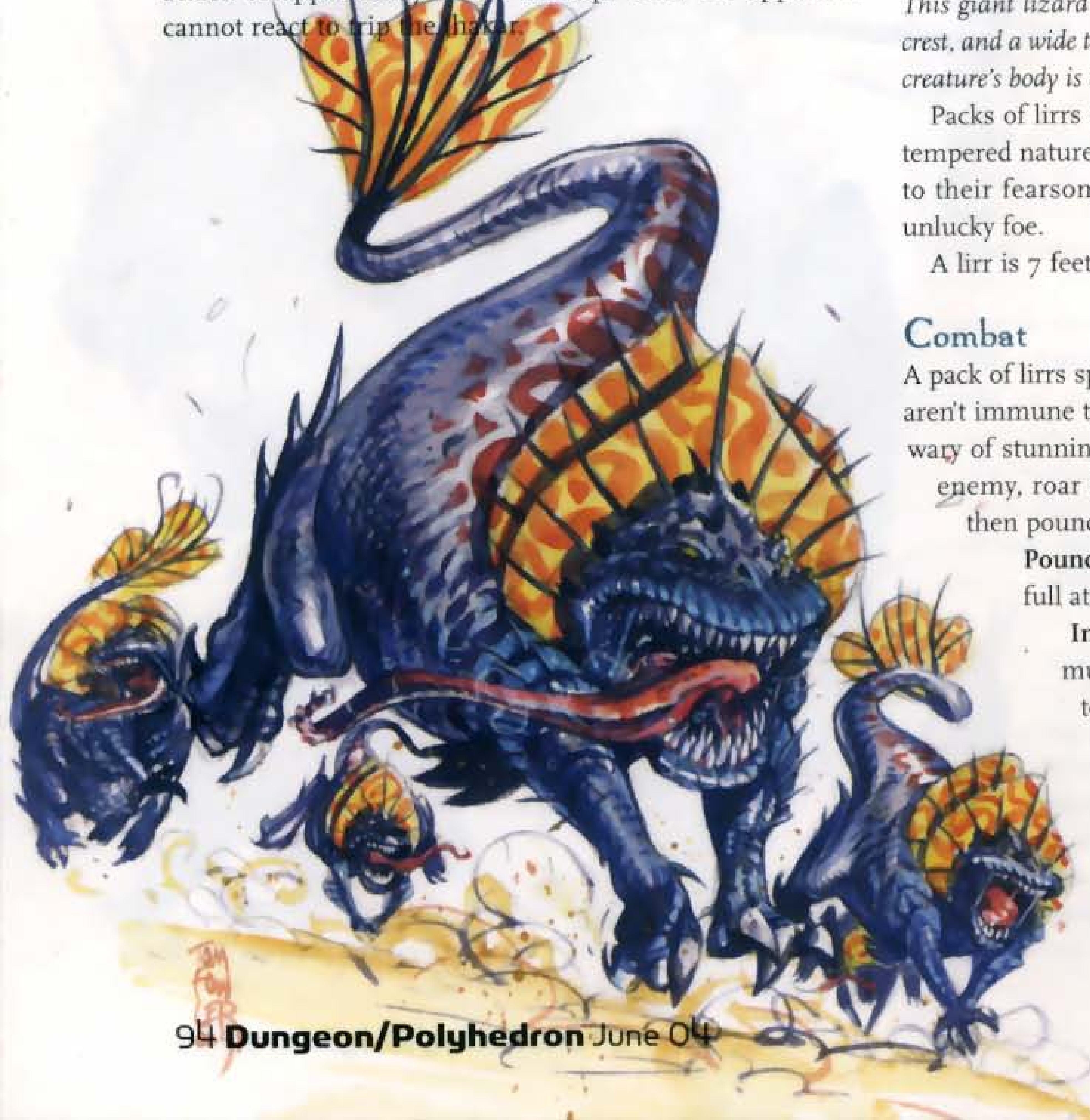
The "jokers of the sands," jhakars are ferocious predators known to play with their food before consuming it.

A jhakar is 4 feet long and weighs from 70 to 90 pounds.

## Combat

The favorite tactic of a pack of jhakars is for the pack leader to clamp its jaws on the prey and drag it down. Then the rest of the pack either attacks immediately or forms a ring around the unfortunate foe to prevent escape.

**Trip (Ex)**: A jhakar that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+2 check bonus) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the jhakar.



# Lirr

Large Magical Beast
**Hit Dice**: 5d10+10 (37 hp)
**Initiative**: +3
**Speed**: 40 ft. (8 squares)
**Armor Class**: 16 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 13
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +5/+14
**Attack**: Bite +10 melee (1d8+5)
**Full Attack**: Bite +10 melee (1d8+5) and 2 claws +4 melee (1d4+2)
**Space/Reach**: 10 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Pounce, improved grab, rake, stunning roar
**Special Qualities**: Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent
**Saves**: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2
**Abilities**: Str 21, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
**Skills**: Balance +7, Hide –1, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Spot +5
**Feats**: Alertness, Weapon Focus (bite)
**Environment**: Warm desert
**Organization**: Solitary, pair, or pack (3–12)
**Challenge Rating**: 4
**Treasure**: —
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 6–8 HD (Large)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This giant lizard is notable for its rainbow-colored fanlike head crest, and a wide tail fan that matches these colors. By contrast, the creature's body is a sleek gray with dull red stripes across the back.*

Packs of lirrs are tough foes, not only because of their ill-tempered nature and prowess in melee combat, but also due to their fearsome roar, which can temporarily disable an unlucky foe.

A lirr is 7 feet long and weighs from 400 to 500 pounds.

## Combat

A pack of lirrs spreads out when it hunts since the creatures aren't immune to the stunning roars of other lirrs. They are wary of stunning each other, so they often circle around an enemy, roar in unison during the surprise round, and then pounce on their quarry.

**Pounce (Ex)**: If a lirr charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

**Improved Grab (Ex)**: To use this ability a lirr must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

**Rake (Ex)**: Attack bonus +7 melee, damage 2d4+2.

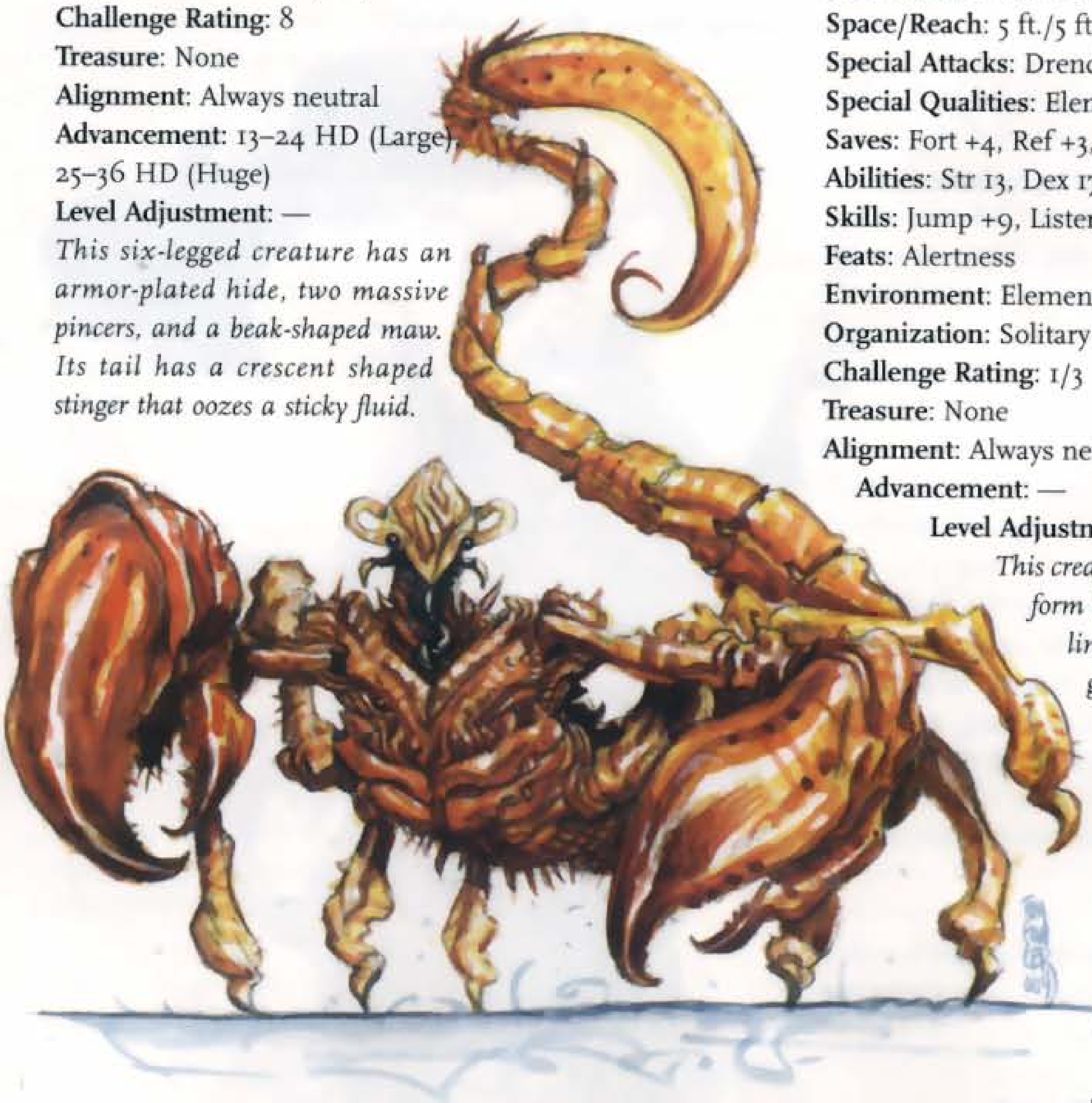
**Stunning Roar (Su)**: A lirr can loose a devastating roar once every 1d4+1 rounds. All creatures (including other lirrs) within a 20-foot cone must succeed on a DC 14 Will save or be stunned for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Skills**: Lirrs have a +4 racial bonus on Balance and Move Silently checks.

## Mastyrial

Large Animal
**Hit Dice**: 12d8+48 (102 hp)
**Initiative**: +0
**Speed**: 30 ft. (6 squares), burrow 15 ft.
**Armor Class**: 22 (–1 size, +13 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 22
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +9/+19
**Attack**: Claw +14 melee (1d8+6)
**Full Attack**: 2 claws +14 melee (1d8+6) and bite +9 melee (1d8+3) and tail +9 melee (1d6+3 plus poison)
**Space/Reach**: 10 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Poison, rend 2d6+9
**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision, tremorsense
**Saves**: Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +4
**Abilities**: Str 22, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 7
**Skills**: Listen +7, Move Silently +5, Spot +7
**Feats**: Alertness, Power Attack
**Environment**: Warm desert
**Organization**: Solitary or pair
**Challenge Rating**: 8
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 13–24 HD (Large), 25–36 HD (Huge)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This six-legged creature has an armor-plated hide, two massive pincers, and a beak-shaped maw. Its tail has a crescent shaped stinger that oozes a sticky fluid.*



Mastyrials ordinarily eat the giant vermin of Athas's deserts, but they aren't particular and attack anything that looks even remotely like food.

A mastyrial is 9 feet long and weighs 800 pounds.

### Combat

Mastyrials are unsubtle creatures, simply wading into melee to make a full attack as often as possible.

**Rend (Ex)**: A mastyrial that hits with both claw attacks latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an extra 2d6+9 points of damage.

**Poison (Ex)**: A mastyrial's tail stinger has a venom that is mildly paralytic and gives its victims muscle tremors. It deals initial and secondary damage of 1d8 Dex (Fort DC 20 negates). The save DC is Constitution-based.

## Rainrunner

Small Elemental (Water)
**Hit Dice**: 1d8+2 (6 hp)
**Initiative**: +3
**Speed**: 40 ft. (8 squares), swim 40 ft.
**Armor Class**: 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 12
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–3
**Attack**: Slam +1 melee (1d4+1)
**Full Attack**: Slam +1 melee (1d4+1)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Drench
**Special Qualities**: Elemental traits
**Saves**: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1
**Abilities**: Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
**Skills**: Jump +9, Listen +5, Spot +5
**Feats**: Alertness
**Environment**: Elemental Plane of Water
**Organization**: Solitary or pack (5–12)
**Challenge Rating**: 1/3
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: —
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This creature looks like a blob of silty water, but its form has a great degree of solidity. It extrudes limbs in front of it to drag itself along the ground with surprising speed.*

Rainrunners congregate in packs on the Elemental Plane of Water, where they swim through the endless sea and draw sustenance from the elemental power of the plane. Elemental clerics of water often summon them.

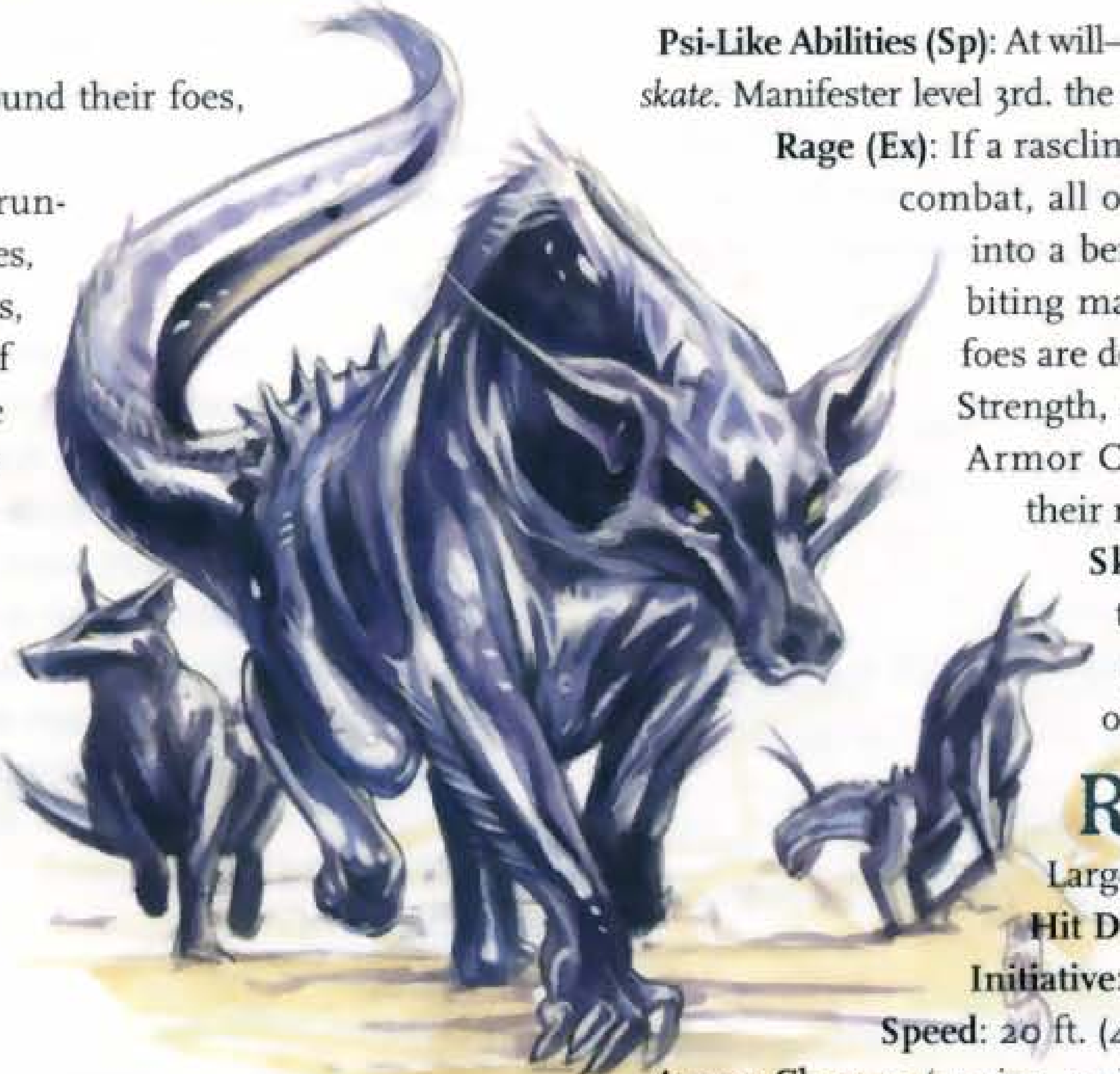
A rainrunner is 3 feet long and weighs 50 pounds.

### Combat

Rainrunners like to surround their foes, attacking their flanks.

**Drench (Ex)**: The rainrunner's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature dispels magical fire it touches as *dispel magic* (caster level equals rainrunner's HD).

**Skills**: Rainrunners have a +4 racial bonus on Jump checks.



## Rasclinn

Medium Magical Beast (Psionic)
**Hit Dice**: 3d10+9 (25 hp)
**Initiative**: +0
**Speed**: 50 ft. (10 squares)
**Armor Class**: 18 (+8 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 18
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +3/+4
**Attack**: Bite +5 melee (1d6+3)
**Full Attack**: Bite +5 melee (1d6+3)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Psi-like abilities, rage
**Special Qualities**: Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent
**Saves**: Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +3
**Abilities**: Str 15, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 15, Cha 11
**Skills**: Listen +13, Spot +3
**Feats**: Run, Toughness
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary or pack (5–12)
**Challenge Rating**: 3
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 4–5 HD (Medium)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*These sleek, four-legged mammals have powerful jaws and silvery fur.*

Rasclinns are root-eating herbivores that run in packs for protection. They are noted for their cunning, and their metallic hides make them a favorite, though challenging, target for hunters.

A rasclinn is 3 feet long and weighs from 50 to 60 pounds.

### Combat

A rasclinn only fights if its young are threatened; in other situations it leads its pursuers on wild chases across the desert wasteland.

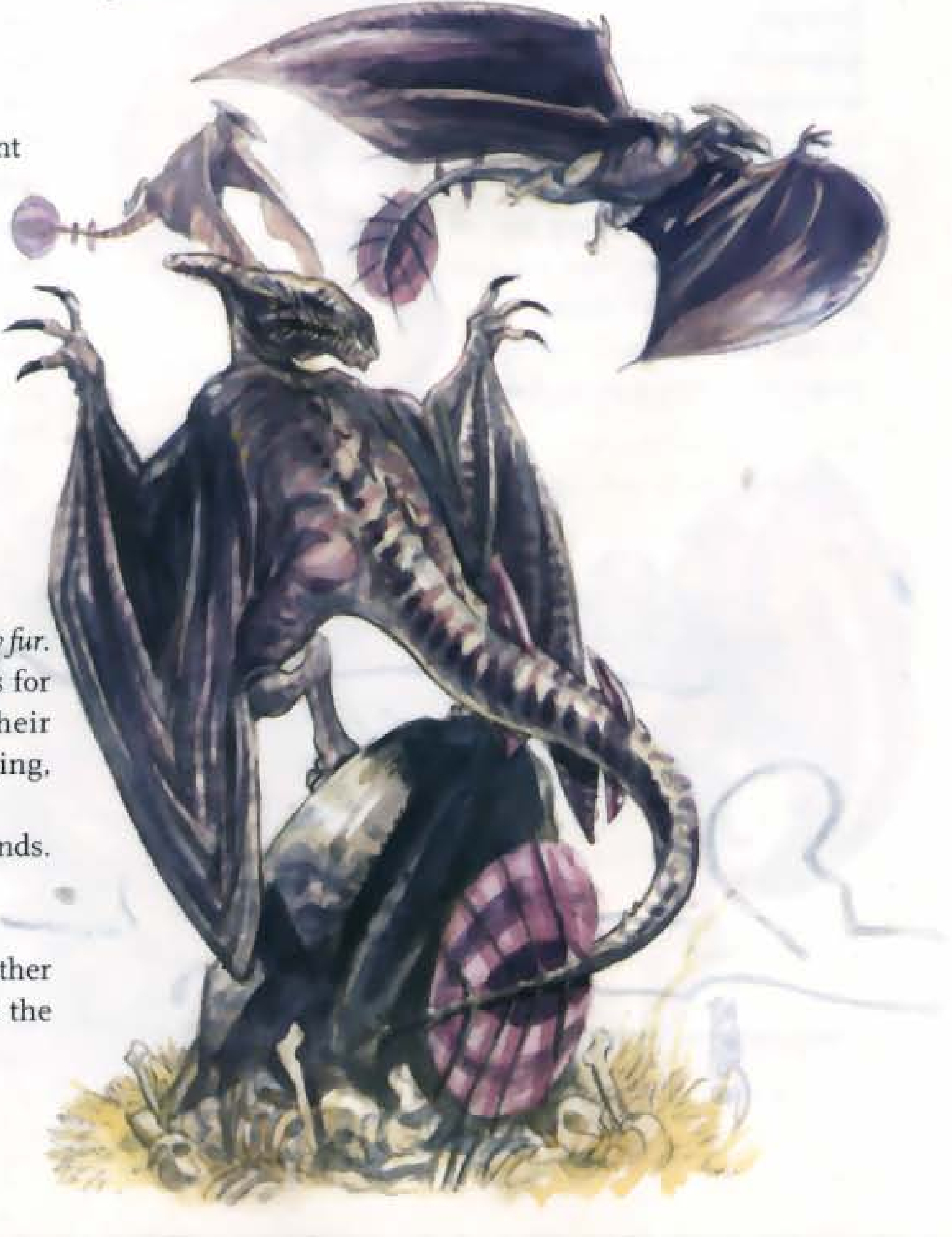
**Psi-Like Abilities (Sp)**: At will—*befuddle* (DC 11); 3/day—*burst*, *skate*. Manifester level 3rd. the save DCs are Charisma-based.

**Rage (Ex)**: If a rasclinn falls unconscious or dies in combat, all other rasclinn in the fight fly into a berserk rage on their next turn, biting madly until either they or their foes are dead. Each rasclinn gains +4 to Strength, +4 to Constitution, and –2 to Armor Class. Rasclinns cannot end their rage voluntarily.

**Skills**: Rasclinns have exceptionally keen hearing, which gives them a +8 racial bonus on Listen checks.

## Razorwing

Large Animal (Psionic)
**Hit Dice**: 4d8+20 (38 hp)
**Initiative**: +4
**Speed**: 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)
**Armor Class**: 17 (–1 size, +4 Dex, +4 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +3/+10
**Attack**: Wing +5 melee (1d6+3)
**Full Attack**: 2 wings +5 melee (1d6+3) and bite +0 melee (1d8+1)
**Space/Reach**: 10 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Psi-like abilities



**Special Qualities**: Psionic flight, low-light vision
**Saves**: Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +3
**Abilities**: Str 17, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 12
**Skills**: Hide +10, Listen +4, Move Silently +9, Spot +4
**Feats**: Alertness, Flyby Attack
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary or flock (2–8)
**Challenge Rating**: 4
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 5–12 HD (Large)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*Gliding on warm air currents above the desert surface, this creature has leathery wings that stretch between its forelimbs and rear legs. Its long tail has a vertical fin, and its head is almost all toothy maw. The leading edges of its wings are a glossy bone-white.*

One of the desert's larger aerial predators, the razorwing hides in the sand or rock formations until it hears a potential meal approaching. Then it takes to the air, hoping to catch its prey unawares.

A razorwing has a 15-foot wingspan and weighs 200 pounds.

### Combat

True to their names, razorwings dive at their prey and slash them with the sharp bones on their wings.

**Psi-Like Abilities (Sp)**: At will—*create sound, detect psionics*; 3/day—*conceal thoughts*. Manifester level 4th.

**Psionic Flight (Ex)**: Razorwings use psionic energy to assist the lift provided by their wings. If a razorwing can't use its psionics (because it's in a null psionics field or similar effect), it can no longer ascend and must descend by at least 5 feet per round.

**Skills**: Razorwing skin changes color to match the surroundings, giving them a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks.

## Seskarran

Medium Animal
**Hit Dice**: 3d8+6 (19 hp)
**Initiative**: +1
**Speed**: 30 ft. (6 squares)
**Armor Class**: 18 (+1 Dex, +7 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 17
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +2/+3
**Attack**: Claw +3 melee (1d4+4)
**Full Attack**: 2 claws +3 melee (1d4+1) and gore +4 melee (1d6)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: —
**Special Qualities**: Low-light vision
**Saves**: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +4
**Abilities**: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
**Skills**: Listen +8, Spot +8
**Feats**: Iron Will, Multiattack
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary or pair
**Challenge Rating**: 2
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 4–5 HD (Medium)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This four-legged creature has a series of interlocking armor plates reminiscent of an insect's carapace. Its horned head is likewise armored, and it boasts four thick claws on each foot.*

This smaller relative of the fordorran tempers its great appetite for destruction with a caution borne of the knowledge that it's far from the toughest thing in the desert. Nonetheless, it attacks anything that isn't bigger than it is, eating as it wanders the desert sands.

A seskarran is 5 feet long and weighs from 500 to 800 pounds.

### Combat

Seskarrans simply wade into melee with anything they meet, ripping their prey with claws as they spear it with their head-horns.

**Skills**: Seskarrans have a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks, because their senses are keen.

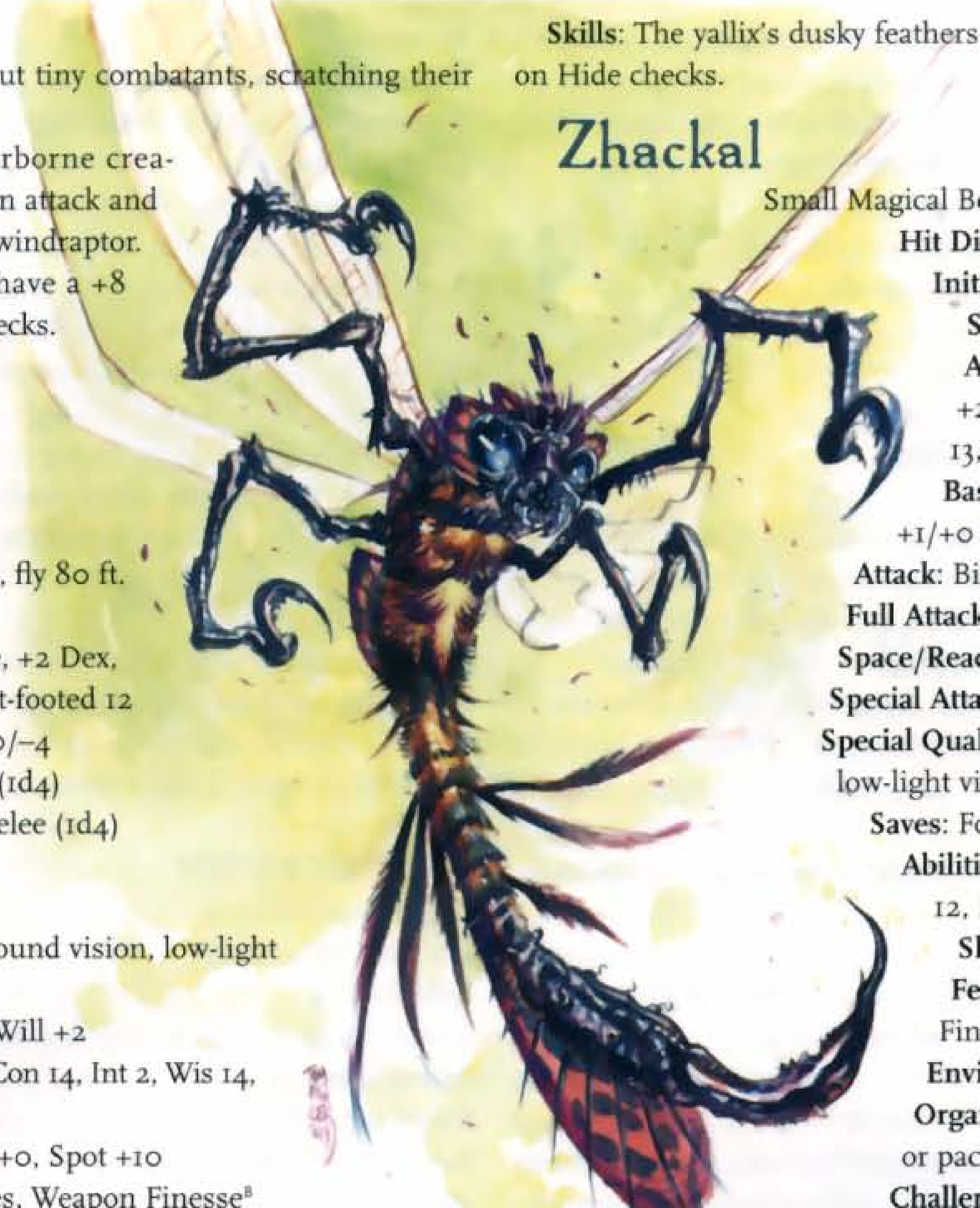
## Windraptor

Tiny Elemental (Air)
**Hit Dice**: 1d8+1 (5 hp)
**Initiative**: +5
**Speed**: Fly 90 ft. (18 squares) (perfect)
**Armor Class**: 19 (+2 size, +5 Dex, +2 natural), touch 17, flat-footed 14
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–10
**Attack**: Talons +7 melee (1d4–2)
**Full Attack**: Talons +7 melee (1d4–2)
**Space/Reach**: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Air mastery
**Special Qualities**: Elemental traits
**Saves**: Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +2
**Abilities**: Str 6, Dex 21, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6
**Skills**: Spot +14
**Feats**: Fly-By Attack, Weapon Finesse$^{B}$
**Environment**: Elemental Plane of Air
**Organization**: Solitary
**Challenge Rating**: 1/2
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: —
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This wispy creature looks like a bird with oversized talons and a glowing spark where its head should be.*

Windraptors are common on the Elemental Plane of Air, where they soar endlessly and cavort in the clouds. Elemental clerics summon them to the Material Plane to act as scouts or combatants.

A windraptor has a 5-foot wingspan and weighs less than a pound.



## Combat

Windraptors are agile but tiny combatants, scratching their foes to death.

**Air Mastery (Ex)**: Airborne creatures take a –1 penalty on attack and damage rolls against a windraptor.

**Skills**: Windraptors have a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks.

# Yallix

Small Animal
**Hit Dice**: 1d8+2 (6 hp)
**Initiative**: +2
**Speed**: 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 80 ft. (average)
**Armor Class**: 14 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 12
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +0/–4
**Attack**: Claws +3 melee (1d4)
**Full Attack**: Claws +3 melee (1d4)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: —
**Special Qualities**: All-around vision, low-light vision
**Saves**: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2
**Abilities**: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6
**Skills**: Hide +6, Search +0, Spot +10
**Feats**: Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse$^{B}$
**Environment**: Warm deserts
**Organization**: Solitary or pair
**Challenge Rating**: 1/2
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 2–3 HD (Medium)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This strange creature looks like a cross between a giant dragonfly and a bird of prey. Its sleek, feathered body tapers to a head with protruding compound eyes and wriggling mandibles. From its back extend four nearly transparent wings. Its four other limbs end in small sharp claws.*

The yallix is a desert predator that likes to ambush its prey, waiting in the shadows for its next meal.

A yallix is 3 feet long with a wingspan of 5 feet. and weighs from 5 to 10 pounds.

## Combat

Yallixes dive from their hiding places toward any creature that looks like it might make a good meal. They use their claws to tear apart their prey, then chew it with their mandibles.

**All-Around Vision (Ex)**: The compound eyes of a yallix give it a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Search checks, and it can't be flanked.

**Skills**: The yallix's dusky feathers give it a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks.

# Zhackal

Small Magical Beast (Psionic)
**Hit Dice**: 1d10+1 (6 hp)
**Initiative**: +2
**Speed**: 40 ft. (8 squares)
**Armor Class**: 15 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13
**Base Attack/Grapple**: +1/+0
**Attack**: Bite +7 melee (1d6+3)
**Full Attack**: Bite +7 melee (1d6+3)
**Space/Reach**: 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks**: Psi-like abilities
**Special Qualities**: Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision
**Saves**: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +1
**Abilities**: Str 16, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 15
**Skills**: Survival +5
**Feats**: Track, Weapon Finesse (bite)$^{B}$
**Environment**: Warm desert
**Organization**: Solitary, pair, or pack (7–16)
**Challenge Rating**: 1
**Treasure**: None
**Alignment**: Always neutral
**Advancement**: 2 HD (Small); 3 HD (Medium)
**Level Adjustment**: —

*This small quadruped has short brown fur and a perpetual snarl. Its eyes are an eerie blue and seem to glow faintly.*

The zhackal is a pack scavenger that seeks out dying creatures and finishes them off psionically before devouring the carcass.

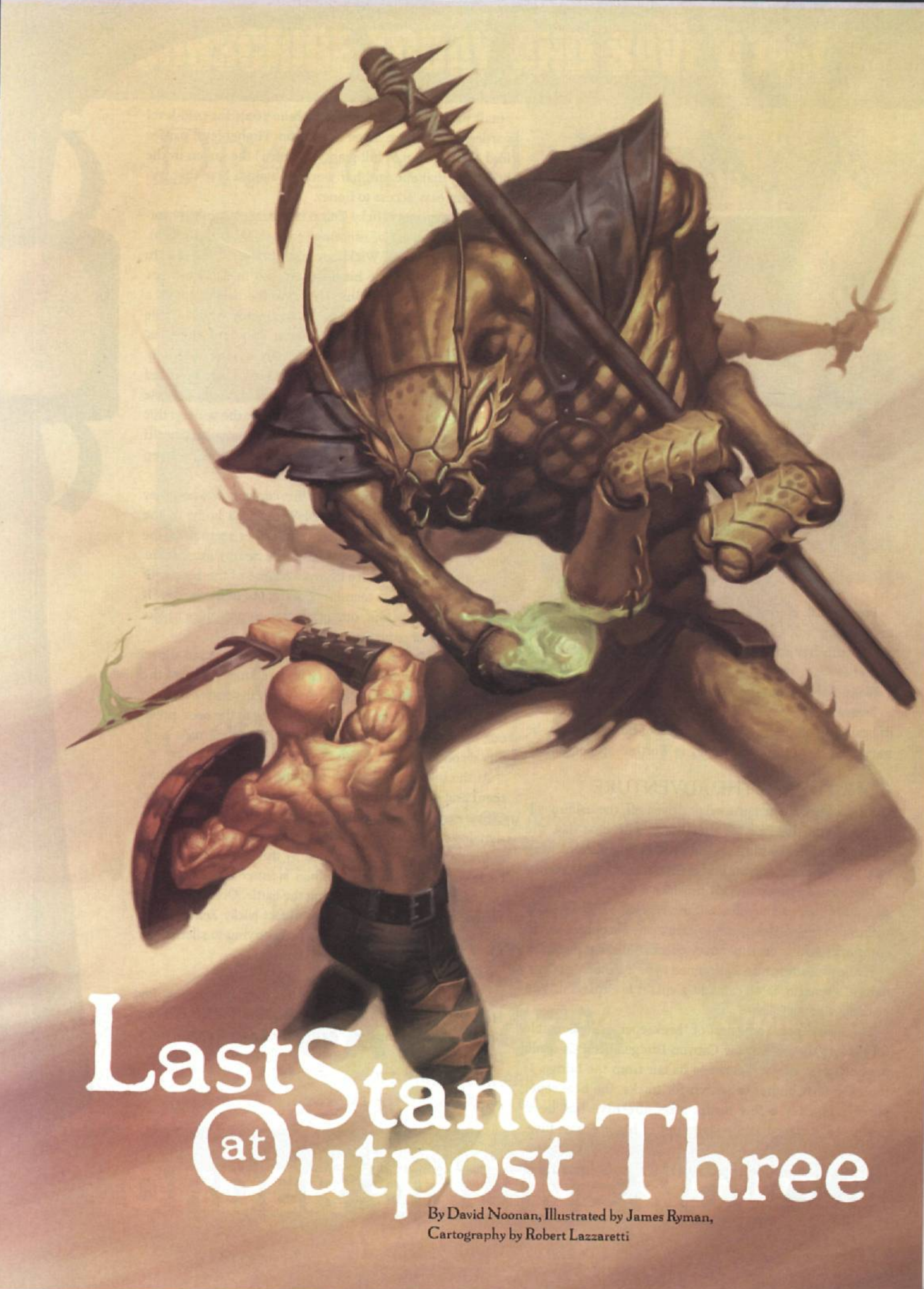
A zhackal is 3 feet long and weighs 50 pounds.

## Combat

Because Zhackals are scavengers, they prefer food that's already helpless or dead. If a pack finds a creature in the desert that looks vulnerable, they manifest *cloud mind* to hide themselves, then circle their prey and try to render it helpless with *ego whips* before consuming it.

When they aren't actively hunting, zhackals run rather than fight, even if their lairs or young are threatened.

**Psi-like Abilities (Sp)**: 3/day—*cloud mind* (DC 14); 1/day—*ego whip* (DC 14). Manifester level 3rd; the save DCs are Charisma-based. Ω



# Last Stand at Outpost Three

By David Noonan, Illustrated by James Ryman,
Cartography by Robert Lazzaretti

As a special treat to *Dragon* and *Dungeon* readers, this month's issues of both magazines feature in-depth coverage of Dark Sun, one of the most popular and original Dungeons & Dragons campaign settings of all time. From its birth in 1991 to its final official RPG product in October of 1996, Dark Sun adventures and sourcebooks explored the world of Athas, a geologically devastated wasteland dominated by tyrannical godlike sorcerers known as the dragon-kings. From the crumbling ruins of massive city-states to the endless vistas of the Silt Sea, psionic menaces lurked in shadows cast by a dying sun, and everywhere, heroes struggled to make a difference in a hostile realm. Athas was a world of cannibal halflings, a place where the insectoid thri-kreen fought alongside bare-chested swordsmen in massive arenas. Most of all, it was a world of thrilling adventure.

Today, eight years after its cancellation, Dark Sun remains the preferred campaign setting of thousands of Dungeons & Dragons players. A dedicated community of devotees have flocked to the setting's official fan website, athas.org. The site features extensive fan-produced files detailing all manner of information about the setting, from write-ups of important locales to treatises on the unusual fruit of Athas.

But fans aren't the only ones who appreciate Dark Sun. Within months of the completion of Dungeons & Dragons third edition, Wizards of the Coast game designer David Noonan started working on a conversion of the setting to the new rules set. The recent release of the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, from Wizards of the Coast, gave us the perfect opportunity to let Dave share his vision of Dark Sun with the world. *Dragon* #319, currently available at newsstands, game stores, or direct from the source at paizo.com, contains the "*Dark Sun Player's Handbook*," a feature that provides everything a player needs to know to create a unique denizen of the world of Athas. This issue of *Dungeon* caters to the other side of the table with the "*Dark Sun DM's Guide*" (see page 60). Skip forward to the "DM's Guide" for an extensive overview of the world of Athas or jump right into the action with "Last Stand at Outpost Three," a perfect introduction to the Dark Sun campaign setting.—*Erik Mona*

"Last Stand at Outpost Three" starts a new Dark Sun campaign with a bang—the PCs meet in a trading outpost under siege by marauding elves. As the siege wears on, the trapped denizens of Outpost Three realize that something is driving the elves to attack heedless of their casualties. The PCs can figure out who's behind the elf attacks and either save the outpost or lead its evacuation.

Regardless of the choices they make, the players get a chance to try out the abilities of their new PCs, and they have a built-in reason to adventure together in the future—they'll all be survivors of the Last Stand at Outpost Three.

While "Last Stand at Outpost Three" is designed for Dark Sun characters, it's pretty easy to adapt the adventure to other campaign settings. Most of the foes work as unusual variants of familiar D&D races and monsters. The Swiftwing tribe could just be a rare subrace of elves touched by strange magic, and the crodlus could be an uncommon breed of dinosaur. Rename the Athasian zombie template to something else (such as "dread zombie"), and you've got an adventure suitable for any desert setting.

"Last Stand at Outpost Three" was also designed to provide NPCs that will be generally useful in an ongoing Dark Sun campaign. Elf bandits, thri-kreen hunters, and psionic healers are staple NPCs in many Dark Sun games. The adventure also gives you room to improvise as a DM. You have a great degree of control over the adventure's pacing, and there are numerous places where you can insert adventure seeds that can blossom as your campaign continues beyond "Last Stand at Outpost Three."

## Adventure Preparation

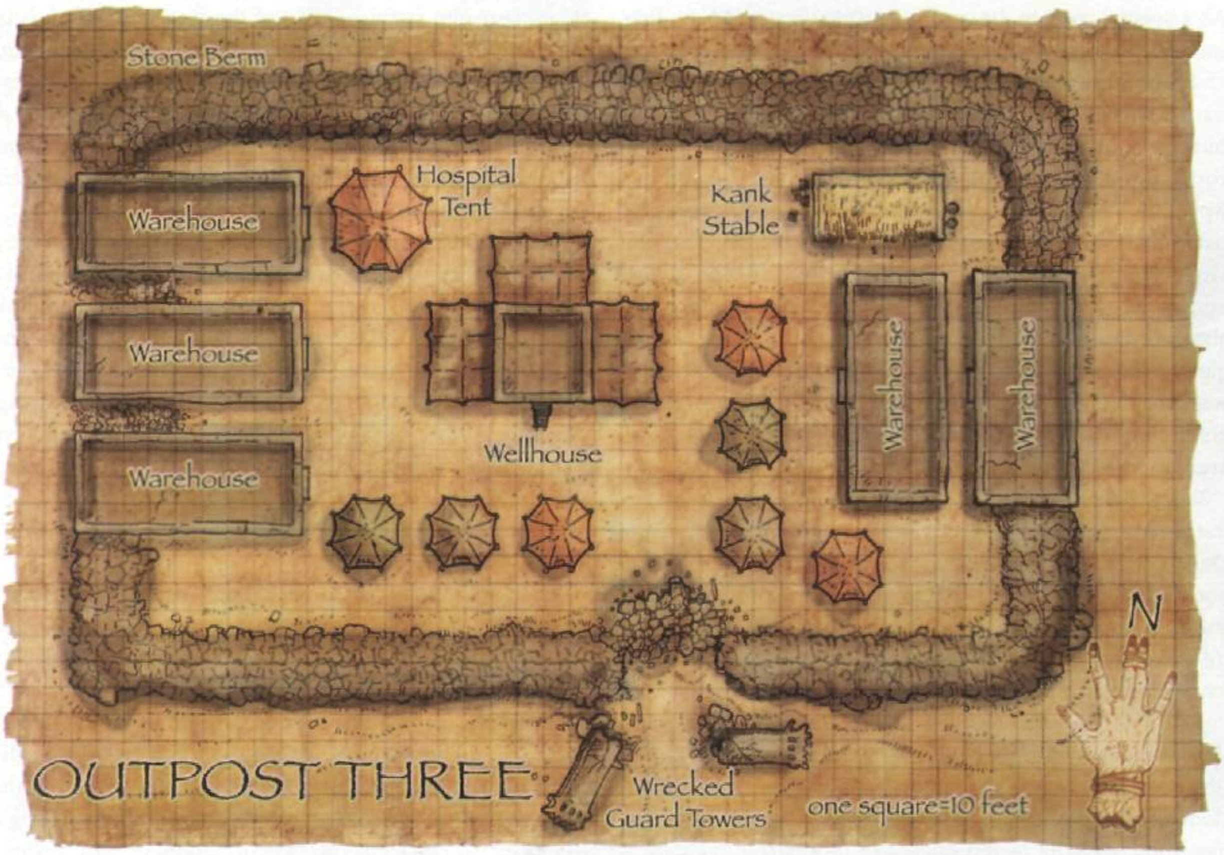
Running "Last Stand at Outpost Three" requires the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*, plus the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and the "*Dark Sun Player's Handbook*" in *Dragon* #319.

Before you run the first session of "Last Stand at Outpost Three," familiarize yourself with the psionics rules in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*. Pay particular attention to the low-level powers and the rules for attaining and expending a psionic focus. The focus rules are important to many psionic feats possessed by NPCs in this adventure, and the PCs in your game might have these feats too.

In subsequent sessions, it's important to have a basic familiarity with the capabilities of the major NPCs, especially Laalarash, Gorgoreth, and Haalak. The PCs have a great degree of freedom in this adventure. They can defend the walls of the outpost to the last man. They can try to negotiate with the elves, with the leaders in the outpost, and eventually with Karadao himself. They can wash their hands of the entire affair and begin the trek back to civilization. The better you understand the motivations and abilities of the major NPCs, the more prepared you'll be when the PCs start getting clever.

If you're using this adventure as the start to your Dark Sun campaign, tell the players to build whatever character they like (subject to the rules in *Dragon* #319's "*Dark Sun Player's Handbook*"). Then imagine a reason why their new character would be at Outpost Three, a caravan stop in the stony barrens southwest of Urik (see p. 65).

Because Outpost Three has the only known water source for many miles, creatures of all races, castes, and classes can be found here. PCs might be hunters who've come to sell hides, caravan guards, elemental clerics preaching to the denizens of the outpost, or simply travelers on their way to or from Urik or Tyr. If the PCs want to establish how they know each other, so much the better. But the very first encounter is explicitly designed to turn strangers into comrades-in-arms.



## Adventure Background

Centuries ago, a powerful cabal of psions known as The Order researched the connection between necromantic power and psionic energy. One of the fruits of their research were the *rods of the dead mind*, powerful psionic items that converted psionic energy into negative energy. With a *rod of the dead mind*, a psion can rebuke and control undead much like a cleric can.

The Order only created eight of the *rods*. They planned to create more, but about three centuries ago most of The Order's leaders were killed when a plot to seize control of all Athas's psionic energy went awry. Fleeing underlings of the Order absconded with the *rods*, which were kept in one of their strongholds in the Ringing Mountains. Since then, they've passed through many hands. At least three are believed to be in Hamanu's treasure vaults in Destiny's Kingdom.

Karadao is the descendant of one of those minions who claimed a *rod of the dead mind* when The Order disintegrated. This *rod* remained in his family for generations, but because none of them were psions, they remained ignorant of its power.

Not so for Karadao. An accomplished psion, Karadao figured out how to use the *rod of the dead mind*, and his research uncovered a further secret. If a psion possesses more than one *rod of the dead mind*, the powers of the *rod* are multiplied, not just added together. Karadao isn't sure how powerful the multiplier is, but he's desperate to find out.

For years, Karadao researched the *rods of the dead mind*. When mundane research failed, Karadao resorted to magic. Six months ago, he paid a princely sum to an elemental cleric of water for a *commune* spell. Based on what the cleric told him, Karadao knows now that a second *rod of the dead mind* lies at the bottom of the well at Outpost Three.

Karadao visited Outpost Three disguised as a traveler, but he learned that only members of the Klethira merchant house can get into the well-house itself—and in any case, it's the best-guarded building in the outpost. Disappointed, Karadao retreated to the Red Tower, an abandoned fortress built by The Order, to plot his next move.

He didn't have to wait long. The Swiftwing elf tribe soon came to investigate the Red Tower's new inhabitant, and Karadao promptly *dominated* their leader, Haalak. Karadao forced Haalak to start giving his tribe redleaf, an addictive smoking-weed that gives users a sense of indestructibility and renders them more suggestible. Karadao repeated this process with two other elf tribes, the Silverseekers and the Nightcloaks, and now he has a small army at his command. Karadao need only visit each elf chief every few days and provide more redleaf from the stash in his tower, and the elves will do as he bids.

Karadao's elves have now surrounded Outpost Three, trapping a caravan inside. They attack every night shortly after sunset, slipping back into the stony barrens when it grows too dark to fight. Sometimes they attack again before dawn.

The outpost chief, Gorgoreth, and the caravan master, Laalarash, have mustered every able-bodied creature to man the walls of the outpost and repel the elves who seem determined to seize Outpost Three regardless of the casualties they take in the process.

### Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins at sunset on the third day of the siege, when Laalarash assigns part of the northeast wall to a mix of otherwise unaffiliated defenders—the PCs, in other words. They repel an elven assault, then a second one later that night. The following day, they might have a prisoner to interrogate, and they'll see evidence of a rift between Laalarash and Gorgoreth.

The following night, a duststorm engulfs Outpost Three, temporarily driving off the elves. Yet there is no relief for the Outpost, for Karadao sends Athasian zombies against them that night.

As the situation grows more desperate, the PCs strike out from Outpost Three (either of their own volition or as part of Gorgoreth's plot).

## Chapter One: Under Siege

The elves have been making hit-and-run attacks on Outpost Three for two days, and the outpost's defenders are nervous, exhausted, and in many cases wounded.

The battles throughout the night are a chance for the players to get used to the abilities of their new PCs and practice teamwork. Accordingly, you have control over the pacing of the first four encounters. If the PCs are doing well, start the next encounter just as the PCs are finishing off the previous encounter. If the PCs are low on hit points, give them a few rounds to heal before starting the next encounter. If the PCs' spells and powers are badly depleted, save the rest of the encounters in Chapter One for a pre-dawn attack and give the PCs time to rest and recover.

As you run the first four encounters, keep close track of elves who reach negative hit points, tracking whether they stabilize or eventually succumb to their wounds. When the battle's over, it's possible the PCs take an unconscious but living elf captive for interrogation.

### Elves on the Wire (EL 4)

**Light**: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

**Sound**: Elven whoops and war cries (automatic).

**Reaction**: To casualties—elves make fighting withdrawal into the stone field.

**Auras**: Faint psionic (*tattoo of concealing amorpha*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), 2 faint magic (*potion of cure light wounds*, DC 16, conjuration).

**Important Rules**: Hide (sniping and creating a diversion to Hide), *Player's Handbook* 76.

> For the last two nights, you've been trapped at Outpost Three, a small trading post and oasis northwest of the city-state of Urik. Bands of marauding elves have attacked the base every night, and their archers have sniped at anyone visible during the heat of the day. At sunset, you share an evening meal in the hospitality tent with many of the outpost's defenders. You see dozens of weary faces, and many bandaged bodies from the previous night's fighting.
>
> You're wiping out your bowls when you hear the cry from the well-house that provides the best vantage point in the outpost: "Elves! Archers to the north! And the east! They're on all sides!"
>
> Laalarash, a human who led a House Klethira caravan into the outpost three days ago, stands and starts barking out orders: "All able-bodied to the wall! Be brave! Defend the house with honor! Gorgoreth, make wall assignments—I'll command from inside the well-house."
>
> Gorgoreth, a human who serves as the outpost's station chief, points at you: "Take the northeast corner of the berm. Defend it as best you can. Fall back if you hear the well-house bell."

You should adjust the text above to account for the PCs in your group. Depending on the PCs' backgrounds, they probably know either Laalarash or Gorgoreth, though probably not well.

**Creatures**: Let the PCs station themselves anywhere they like below the crest of the berm (see the Northeast Corner map). As soon as the elves (with their +8 Spot bonus) notice someone over the crest of the berm, roll initiative and start the fight. The elves attack in waves. The first wave consists of two elf rogues.

➤ **Swiftwing Rogue, Elf Rog2 (2)**: CR 2; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 2d6+2; hp 9 each; Init +4; Spd 50 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +2 melee (1d6/18–20, masterwork bronze scimitar) or +6 ranged (1d8/×3, masterwork longbow); SA psionics, sneak attack +1d6; SQ elf traits, evasion, low-light vision, trapfinding; AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8.

*Skills*: Balance +6, Bluff +4, Diplomacy +1, Hide +9, Intimidate +1, Jump +16, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Search +7, Spot +8, Survival +1 (+3 following tracks), Tumble +11.

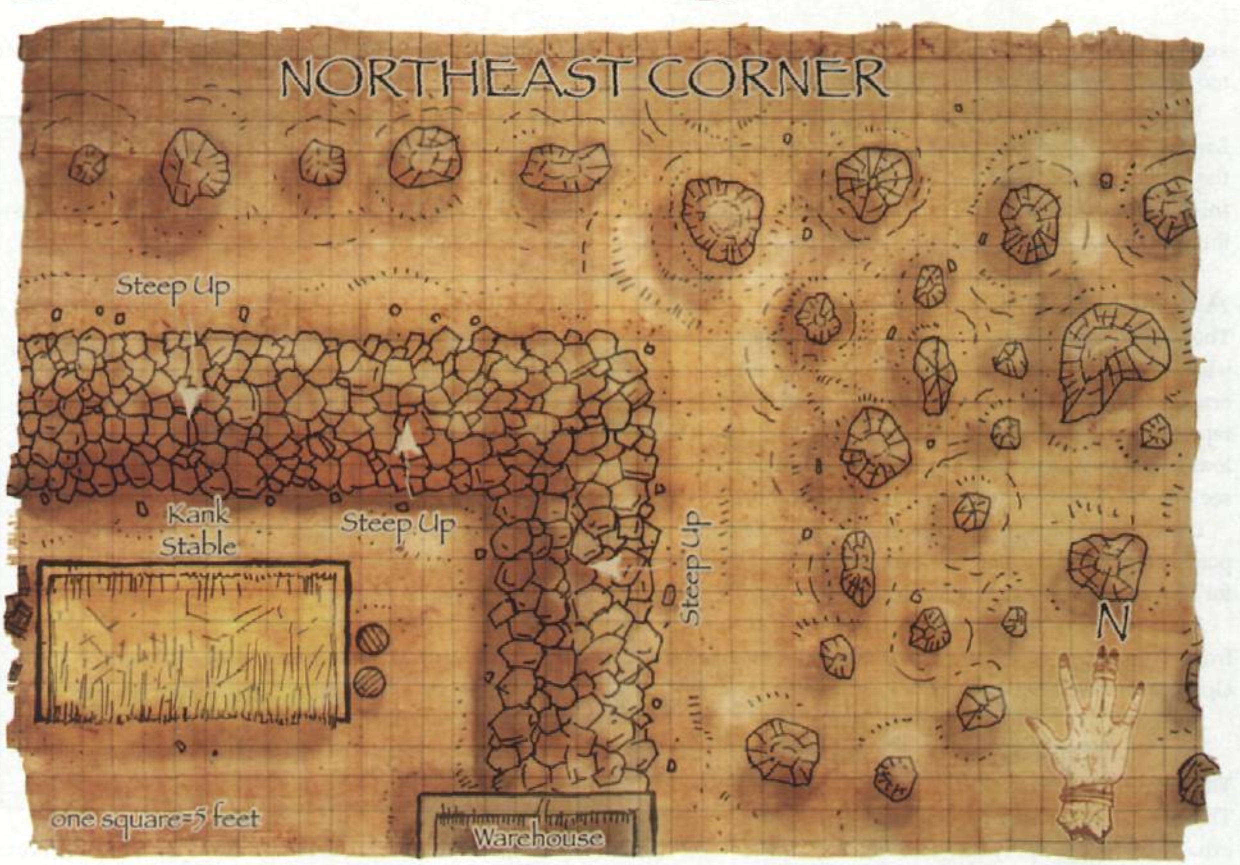
*Feats*: Endurance$^B$, Speed of Thought.

*Languages*: Common, Elven.

*Powers Known* (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*.

*Possessions*: Masterwork bronze scimitar, masterwork longbow, 10 iron arrows, masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, *tattoo of concealing amorpha*, *tattoo of animal affinity*, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, 5 cp.

**Tactics**: The two elves prefer to take pot shots with their longbows from behind the rocks. They'll hide (+9 Hide



bonus) and sneak attack the first defenders they see over the stone berm. After the first round, the rogues can use their Bluff bonus of +4 (opposed by Sense Motive) to create enough of a diversion to hide again behind the rocks.

Once the elves start to face opposition, they'll take time to use their *tattoos of animal affinity* (bringing their scimitar attack bonus to +4 and damage to 1d6+2) and *tattoos of concealing amorpha* (20% miss chance). They won't both activate their tattoos at the same time. One elf continues the attack while other uses tattoos, then the first elf uses tattoos while the other attacks.

If the PCs come out to get the Swiftwings, the elves use their speed of 50 feet and Tumble of +11 to get into as many flanking situations as possible.

The rogues' Armor Class falls to 17 if they used their longbows in the previous round, because they have bucklers.

Swiftwing rogues retrieve and drink a *potion of cure light wounds* whenever they're reduced below 5 hp, withdrawing from melee if necessary to avoid an attack of opportunity.

**Development**: The first challenge for the PCs is relatively straightforward: two elf snipers. Just as they're finishing off the rogues in this encounter, introduce the elves from the Second Wave encounter. Depending on how closely that encounter follows this one, you may or may not want to reroll initiative.

## Second Wave (EL 4)

**Light**: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

**Sound**: Elven whoops and war cries (automatic).

**Reaction**: To casualties—elves make fighting withdrawal into the stone field.

**Auras**: Faint psionic (*tattoo of concealing amorpha*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), 2 faint magic (*potion of cure light wounds*, DC 16, conjuration).

**Important Rules**: Bluff (feinting in combat), *Player's Handbook* 68.

The elf attack is disorganized; they're arriving at Outpost Three in small groups. Now another pair of elf rogues from the Swiftwing tribe arrives to continue the assault.

**Creatures**: If the characters took out the first two elves with little difficulty, just introduce the new foes, rolling initiative for them at the top of a combat round. If the PCs are wounded or spread out, give them a few rounds to regroup before these emerge from the stone field.

**Swiftwing Rogues (2)**: hp 8, 9; See Elves on the Wire, page 35.

**Tactics**: As described in the Elves on the Wire encounter above, but these rogues are more likely to have melee targets on the outside on the berm. After using their tattoos, the rogues try to flank a foe in melee and cut him down with their scimitars.

If the rogues can't get into a flanking situation, they can try to deny a foe his Dexterity bonus and thus set up a sneak attack the following round. Their Bluff check of +4 is opposed by the PCs' Sense Motive check result + base attack bonus.

**Development**: Depending on the PCs' situation, either allow a few rounds to elapse before continuing to the Crodlu Assault encounter below, or introduce the NPCs from the next encounter just as the PCs are finishing off the elf rogues.

## Crodlu Assault (EL 6)

**Light**: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).
**Sound**: Elven whoops and war cries (automatic).
**Reaction**: To casualties—elf makes fighting withdrawal into the stone field.
**Auras**: Faint psionic (*+1 studded leather*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), faint psionic (*tattoo of dimension swap*, DC 17, psychoportation).
**Important Rules**: Handle Animal (list of commands), *Player's Handbook* 74.

**Creatures**: The next wave of Swiftwings attack the northeast corner of Outpost Three. This group consists of a ranger with a trained crodlu.

➤ **Swiftwing Crodlu-Tamer, Elf Rgr3/Ftr1**; CR 4; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 3d8 + 1d10; hp 19; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +10 melee (1d6+2/19–20, masterwork iron short sword) or +9 ranged (1d8+2/×3, masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+2/19–20, masterwork iron short sword) and +8 melee (1d6+1/19–20, masterwork iron short sword) or +9 ranged (1d8+2/×3, masterwork composite longbow); SA favored enemy (human) +2, psionics, two weapon combat style; SQ low-light vision, elf traits, wild empathy +4; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 20, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills*: Handle Animal +6, Hide +11, Listen +9, Move Silently +11, Search +2, Spot +9, Survival +7.

*Feats*: Endurance$^B$, Psionic Weapon, Track$^B$, Two-Weapon Fighting$^B$, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword).

*Languages*: Common, Elven.

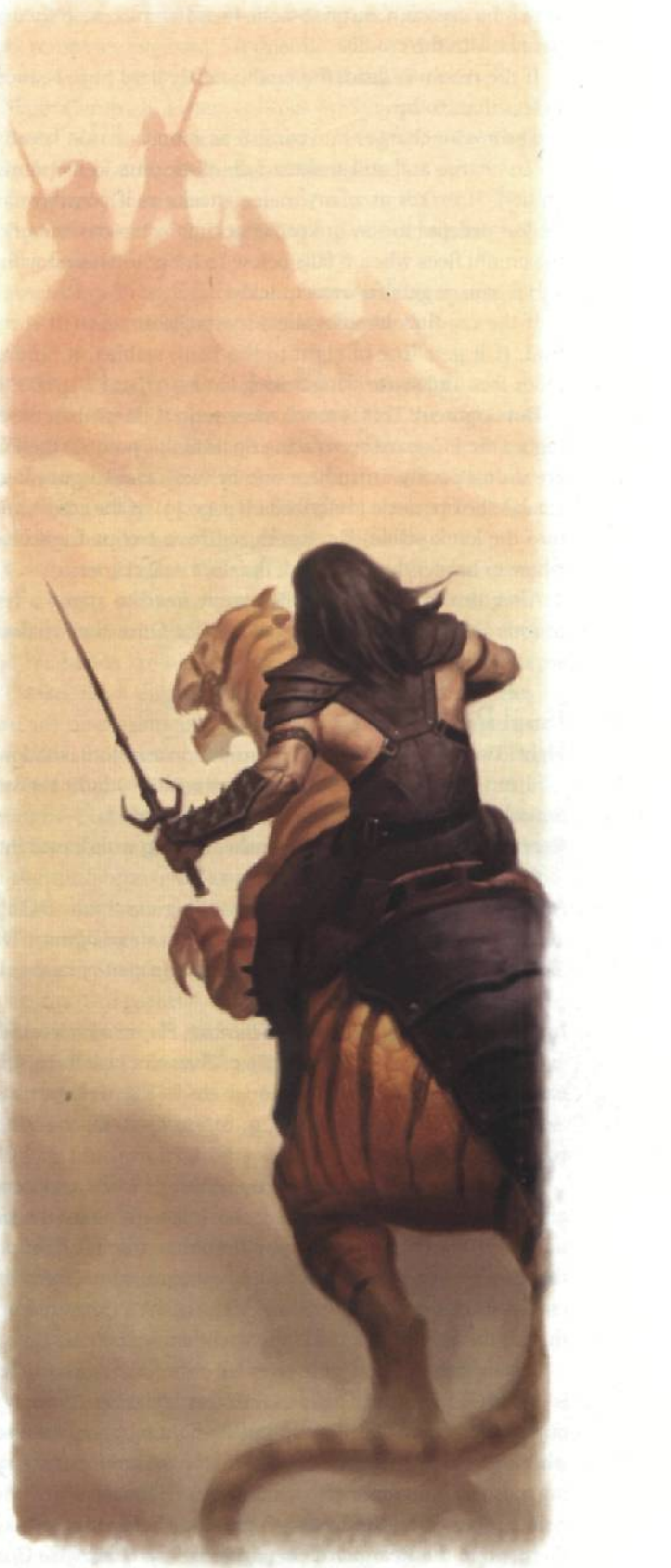
*Powers Known* (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*.

*Possessions*: *+1 studded leather*, 2 masterwork iron short swords, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str), 20 iron arrows, *tattoo of dimension swap*, *tattoo of animal affinity*, 25 cp.

➤ **Crodlu**: hp 34; *Dungeon* #110 87.

**Tactics**: The crodlu-tamer has a *tattoo of animal affinity*, which he uses before combat if possible to improve his Dexterity by +4. This improves both melee and ranged attacks by +2 (because he has the Weapon Finesse feat) and improves his Hide and Move Silently skills and Reflex saves by +2.

The crodlu-tamer is the only elf who can control the crodlus. It takes a move action and a DC 10 Handle Animal check to give a crodlu the Attack, Stay, or Guard commands. If the check fails, the crodlu keeps doing whatever it was doing last round.



The crodlu-tamer also has a *tattoo of dimension swap*, which he uses as a surprise tactic to switch places on the battlefield with the crodlu.

If the crodlu is dead, the crodlu-tamer flees once reduced to less than 10 hp.

The crodlu charges into combat as soon as it can, because it can charge and still make a full attack (due to its pounce ability). It makes as many melee attacks as it possibly can. Unless ordered to stay or keep attacking by the crodlu-tamer, the crodlu flees when it falls below 10 hit points—and with a 250 ft. run, it gets far away quickly.

If the crodlu's handler dies, it attacks any nonelf it can find. If it gets line of sight to the kank stables, it ignores other foes and starts slaughtering kanks.

**Development**: This is much more serious threat than the elf rogues the PCs have been facing up until this point. If the PCs are doing poorly, introduce one or two caravan guards or Haalak the fire-cleric (described on page 39). If the crodlu gets into the kank stable, Gorgoreth redirects troops from elsewhere to bolster the defense of the northeast corner.

After this encounter, the PCs may need to spend a few rounds healing magically or psionically. Once they've done so, start the Final Push encounter.

## Final Push (EL 5)

**Light**: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

**Sound**: Elven whoops and war cries (automatic).

**Reaction**: To casualties—elves make fighting withdrawal into the stone field.

**Aura**: Faint psionic (*tattoo of concealing amorpha*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), 2 faint magic (*potion of cure light wounds*, DC 16, conjuration).

**Important Rules**: Bluff (feinting in combat), *Player's Handbook* 68.

**Creatures**: This is the last group of elves to attack the northeast corner of the outpost—although the PCs don't know that.

**Swiftwing Rogues (3)**: hp 11, 9, 8; See Elves on the Wire, page 35.

**Tactics**: These elf rogues take up positions in the rocks and attack with ranged or melee weapons, depending on the situation. If the crodlu and the crodlu-tamer are still fighting, they run for the berm while keeping their distance from the crodlu. They hope to either draw some of the PCs away from the crodlu fight or get inside the wall themselves.

**Development**: When these elves fall or flee, the sunset attack is over. PCs with line of sight to the other stone berms can see outpost defenders at the ready, but no fighting going on elsewhere. The survivors soon start to tend to the wounded, carrying those most in dire need of aid to the well-house.

If the PCs chase the elves into the stone field or try to track them, go to the Rearguard encounter below. Otherwise Gorgoreth visits the northeast wall in about 10 minutes and tells the PCs they can stand down, saying, "None of you are on night watch, so you can get some rest."

## Rearguard (EL 6)

**Light**: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

**Sound**: Faint shouts from outpost defenders (automatic).

**Reaction**: None.

**Aura**: Faint psionic (*+1 composite longbow*, DC 17, metacreativity), Faint psionic (*+1 studded leather*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), faint magic (*potion of invisibility*, DC 17, illusion), 4 faint magic (*potion of cure light wounds*, DC 16, conjuration).

**Important Rules**: Track, *Player's Handbook* 101; Invisibility, *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* 295; Poison, *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* 296.

Once the elves are repulsed by the defenders at Outpost Three, they flee into the surrounding desert. PCs who chase them run into one of the Swiftwing tribe's best raiders. This elf tries to drive the PCs back to the outpost—or at least occupy them long enough for the others to escape.

Unless the PCs can somehow maintain line of sight to the fleeing elves, they'll have to follow tracks to trace the elves' path through the stone field. A DC 17 Survival check is required to track the elves.

If the PCs penetrate more than a few hundred feet into the stone field, they'll run into one of the Swiftwing tribe's subchiefs guarding the elves' path of retreat.

➤ **Swiftwing Boss, Elf Rgr2/Rog4**: CR 6; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 2d8+4d6+6; hp 29; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (2d4+1/18–20, masterwork iron falchion) or +11 ranged (1d8+2, *+1 composite longbow*); Full Atk +7 melee (2d4+1/18–20, masterwork falchion) or +9/+9 ranged (1d8+2, *+1 composite longbow*); SA psionics, favored enemy (human) +2, sneak attack +2d6; SQ elf traits, evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, wild empathy +3; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills*: Balance +7, Handle Animal +4, Hide +14, Jump +16, Listen +10, Move Silently +13, Spot +10, Survival +6, Tumble +15.

*Feats*: Endurance$^{B}$, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot$^{B}$, Track$^{B}$, Weapon Focus (longbow).

*Languages*: Common, Elven.

*Powers Known* (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*.

*Possessions*: *+1 composite longbow (+1 Str)*, masterwork iron falchion, *+1 studded leather*, *tattoo of animal affinity*, *potion of invisibility*, 20 iron arrows, 4 *potions of cure light wounds*, 1 dose large scorpion venom.

**Tactics**: The elf's first standard action in combat is to activate his *tattoo of animal affinity*, increasing his Strength to 17. This gives him a +9 melee attack with his falchion (2d4+4)

but doesn't increase his *+1 composite longbow* damage since its Strength rating is +1. He then takes a full-round action to retrieve and drink a *potion of invisibility*. Once he's invisible, he sneaks around the PCs, looking for a good sneak attack opportunity. If he uses his bow on a target within 30 feet, he gains an additional +1 on attack and damage due to the Point Blank Shot feat.

The Swiftwing boss can maneuver around the battlefield well with his speed of 40 feet and his +15 Tumble bonus. He's also stocked with healing potions, so he can withdraw for a round or two, quaff some potions, then return to the fray.

If one PC in particular seems dangerous, the Swiftwing boss spends a full-round action to retrieve and apply scorpion venom on an arrow. If he later hits with that arrow, the poison deals 1d6 points of Strength damage (initial and secondary) and has a Fortitude save DC of 18.

## Chapter Two: Between Battles

When the PCs aren't on the wall, they can get rest or explore other parts of Outpost Three. If they did well defending the northeast part of the outpost, the other outpost defenders treat them with a degree of deference and the PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus on any Diplomacy or Gather Information checks made in the outpost.

If the PCs want to check out the various tents and buildings within the outpost, they can wander around as they like. The inside of the well-house and the western warehouses remain off-limits to anyone who isn't a member of House Klethira (which is everyone but Laalarash and Gorgoreth in the outpost at this time). Gorgoreth used his *psionic lock* power to secure the doors to the western warehouses, and a *forbiddance* (cast last year by an Urikite templar) bars entrance to the interior of the well-house. A rune of warning over the doorway warns casual thieves of the danger of entering; a successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 21) allows a character to realize the rune specifically warns about a *forbiddance* spell. Of those present, only Gorgoreth and Laalarash know the password ("Keltivarn"). The spell effect is at caster level 12 and is keyed to the lawful evil alignment.

**Creatures**: It's not likely the PCs ever fight the outpost guards, but they may come to aid the PCs if they get in over their heads in a fight. Some of these guards are permanently stationed at Outpost Three and some of them came in on Laalarash's caravan.

If the guards are drawn into a fight involving the PCs, they tend to be cautious and seek cover long enough to manifest *offensive precognition*. They then shoot their bows at the nearest foes. Because the guards have Point Blank Shot, they have an extra +1 to attack rolls and deal an extra point of damage against targets within 30 feet.

Guards flee or seek total cover when reduced to 5 hp or less.

➧ **Outpost Guards (12)**: Human Ftr 2; CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d10+4; hp 15; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (2d4+2/18–20, bronze falchion) or +6 ranged (1d8+3/×3, masterwork composite longbow); SA psionics; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills*: Climb +8, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +2.

*Feats*: Alertness, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Focus (composite longbow).

*Languages*: Common.

*Powers Known* (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*offensive precognition*.

*Possessions*: Bronze falchion, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str), 10 iron arrows, bronze breastplate.

### Getting Healing (EL 3 or EL 5; see text)

There are two NPCs present who can heal the wounded—and both Amanya and Haalak are busy doing just that after the latest assault. The PCs have to negotiate with them if they want healing. Haalak the fire-cleric is easier to get healing from, but Amanya the egoist is a better healer.

**Creatures**: Haalak the fire cleric, an older human male with shaggy white hair, wanders around the outpost at random, muttering to himself a lot. He wears chitin armor and his hands are black, as if he rubbed charcoal on them.

Haalak is an engaging conversationalist, but his tries to turn any discussion toward his favorite topic: burning things. His initial attitude is indifferent, but that's a reflection of how he feels about topics that aren't fire-related. He's friendly enough—just obsessed with fire and more than a little crazy.

Amanya is an older gray-haired human woman who wears an ill-fitting bronze breastplate. She rarely leaves her hospital tent, which is crowded with the wounded and dying.

Amanya lives at the outpost, and she's a good friend to Gorgoreth. She's not happy that Laalarash arrived and pulled rank on Gorgoreth—and she gets angrier each time Laalarash retreats to the well-house during a fight.

➧ **Haalak, Human Clr3 (Fire)**: CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d8+6; hp 20; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +3 melee (1d8/×3, masterwork iron spear) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light repeating crossbow); SA psionics, spells, turn undead; SQ —; AL CG; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 17, Cha 15.

*Skills*: Concentration +8, Survival +6.

*Feats*: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (light repeating crossbow), Psionic Endowment, Wild Talent.

*Languages*: Common.

*Spells Prepared* (4/3+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*detect magic* (3), *detect poison*; 1st—*burning hands**, *detect evil*, *entropic shield*, *sanctuary*; 2nd—*bull's strength*, *produce flame**, *summon monster II*.

*Domain Spell; *Domains*: Death (death touch 1/day), Fire (turn or destroy water creatures).

*Powers Known* (5 PP; save DC 12 + power level): 1st—*energy ray*.

*Possessions*: *+1 chitin armor*, masterwork light repeating crossbow, 5 iron arrows, masterwork iron spear, scroll of *lesser restoration*, scroll of *cure moderate wounds*, scroll of *speak with dead*.

**Amanya, Human Psi5 (egoist)**: CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d4+15; hp 27; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk +1 melee (1d6–1, iron shortspear) or +2 ranged (1d6–1, iron shortspear); SA psionics; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 12.

*Skills*: Autohypnosis +11, Concentration +9, Heal +11, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (psionics) +12, Psicraft +12.

*Feats*: Body Fuel, Mind Over Body, Overchannel, Psionic Body, Talented.

*Languages*: Common, Aarakocran, Elvish, Ignan, Thri-Kreen.

*Powers Known* (41 PP; save DC 14 + power level): 1st—*detect psionics*, *empathy*, *far hand*, *inertial armor*, *missive*, *thicken skin*; 2nd—*detect hostile intent*, *empathic transfer*, *mass missive*, *psionic identify*, *psionic tongues*; 3rd—*body adjustment*, *body purification*.

*Possessions*: Bronze breastplate, iron shortspear, iron dagger, *dorje of psionic restoration* (9 charges left).

**Haalak Tactics**: If Haalak is acting as a battlefield healer, he casts *sanctuary* on himself and scurries from ally to ally, casting two *cure light wounds* and two *cure moderate wounds*. He also has *burning hands* and *produce flame* at his disposal, but casting either spell ends his *sanctuary*.

If Haalak is fighting, he casts *summon monster II* from behind cover to summon a cinderbrute (p. 86). Then he casts *entropic shield*, then uses *produce flame* and his *energy ray* psionic power (choosing fire, of course) to attack at range. Once those spells and powers have been used, Haalak fires his crossbow from behind cover, saving *burning hands* for any foes that try to engage him in melee.

Haalak is very aggressive in a fight. He only retreats if PCs convince him to do so (his starting attitude is unfriendly for this purpose).

**Amanya Tactics**: Amanya can use her *empathic transfer* power to take others' wounds upon herself, healing a wounded ally in this way. Then she uses *body adjustment* to heal herself.

If Amanya runs low on power points, she can use her Body Fuel feat to get additional power points for each point of Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution damage she takes. She naturally heals 3 points of ability score damage per day (due to her Mind Over Body feat) and she has a *dorje of psionic restoration*, so she's willing to suffer a lot of ability score damage if the need is dire.

If Amanya gets into a fight, she is very cautious, fleeing at the first available opportunity. She knows how important she is to the defense of the outpost.

**Haalak Development**: The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence Haalak: Characters talk about burning something (+2); PCs help him light something big on fire (+4); Characters let it slip that they think he's crazy (–2); Characters put out a major fire (–4).

*If Hostile (Attacked by PCs)*: Attacks, but retreats when endangered.

*If Unfriendly (Check Result 0 or Less)*: Ignores PCs or threatens them with the power of fire.

*If Indifferent (Check Result 1–14)*: Lights things on fire for them, but that's it.

*If Friendly (Check Result 15–29)*: Puts half his spellcasting at the PCs' disposal.

*If Helpful (Check Result 30 or More)*: Puts spellcasting and scrolls at PCs' disposal.

**Amanya Development**: Amanya's initial attitude is unfriendly to any PC who hasn't lived at the outpost for at least six months. The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence her: Amanya learns of PCs' prowess (+2); an NPC other than Laalarash vouches for them (+4); Laalarash gets involved (–2); PCs imply that she's "wasting" healing on others (–4).

*If Hostile (Check Result 4 or Less)*: Has orderlies "escort" PCs from hospital tent.

*If Unfriendly (Check Result 5–14)*: Brusquely explains the concept of triage, telling the PCs she has more serious cases to deal with.

*If Indifferent (Check Result 15–24)*: Grudgingly spends one-third of her available power points on PCs.

*If Friendly (Check Result 25–39)*: Spends one-half of her available power points on PCs.

*If Helpful (Check Result 40 or More)*: Spends two-thirds of her available power points on PCs.

**Ad-Hoc Experience Award**: If the PCs successfully negotiate with either Haalak or Amanya for healing, award them experience as if they'd defeated that NPC in combat. Subsequent negotiations for healing don't earn experience.

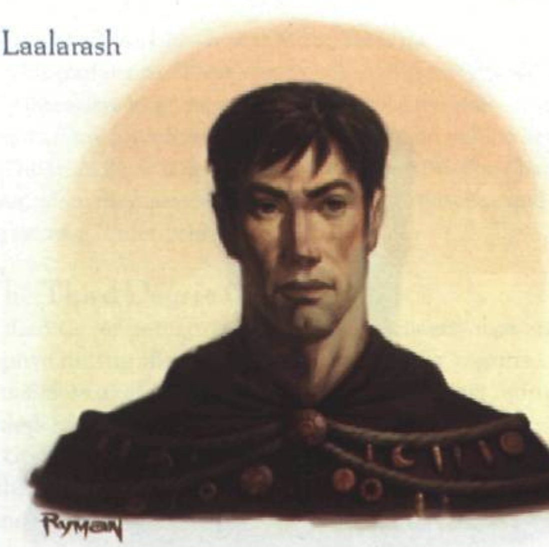
## Talking to Laalarash

Laalarash is in way over his head. The master of a caravan bringing tools and "comfort items" (booze and food) to one of Urik's obsidian mines in the Ringing Mountains, he found himself trapped inside Outpost Three when the elves surrounded the place. He's assumed command, but he knows very little about even basic military tactics—his expertise lies in profit margins and negotiating tariff rates with Urik's templars.

**Creature**: Laalarash is determined to put on a brave face for those under his command, so he often "tours the battlements" (always during the day when attacks are unlikely) and "drills the troops" (always a pointless marching exercise or parade inspection). He watches fights from the relative safety of the well-house tower, too frightened to approach the battle further and too indecisive to issue orders.

But away from an actual battle, Laalarash is less of a pushover. He's absolutely determined to save both the outpost and his caravan, and he brooks no talk of abandoning

Laalarash



Outpost Three or negotiating surrender with the elves. He's eager to "improve morale" among the outpost defenders by talking tactics, and he entertains reasonable suggestions, making them seem like his own ideas if possible.

➤ **Laalarash Human Rog4/Rgr3:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d6 + 3d8; hp 27; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1/19–20, masterwork blood obsidian short sword) or +8 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +6/+6/+3 melee (1d6+1/19–20, two masterwork blood obsidian short swords) or +8 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); SA psionics, favored enemy (elves) +2, sneak attack +2d6, two-weapon combat style; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, wild empathy +9; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 18.

*Skills*: Appraise +8, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Gather Information +13, Handle Animal +12, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +8, Profession +8, Ride +12, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Survival +6 (+8 above ground).

*Feats*: Inquisitor, Dodge, Endurance$^{B}$, Psionic Dodge, Track$^{B}$, Two-Weapon Fighting$^{B}$, Weapon Focus (short sword).

*Languages*: Common, Dwarven, Maenadi.

*Powers Known* (6 PP; save DC 14 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*; 2nd—*psionic lock*.

*Possessions*: *+2 studded leather armor, cloak of protection +1*, 2 masterwork blood obsidian short swords, masterwork light crossbow, 10 iron bolts, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds, potion of fly*.

**Tactics**: Laalarash prefers not to fight, using his social skills to talk his way out of a battle. Failing that, he puts as many loyal troops as possible between himself and the enemy, then acts as a sniper, hiding behind cover and using his crossbow to sneak attack nearby enemies. In melee, he fights cautiously, trying to leave himself a path of withdrawal at all times.

Because Laalarash has both the Dodge and Psionic Dodge feats, his Armor Class is two points higher against a single foe he designates—usually the strongest enemy melee fighter he can see.

If Laalarash takes more than 10 points of damage, he drinks one of his *potions of cure moderate wounds*. He saves the *potion of fly* for a getaway if he can't flee on foot.

**Development**: Laalarash's initial attitude is indifferent—a reflection of the airs he's putting on as commander of the outpost's defense.

The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence him: Characters use military jargon to get their point across (+2); PCs suggest ideas that make Laalarash seem clever or brave (+4); Characters mention Gorgoreth in a positive way (–2); PCs cast aspersions on Laalarash or the importance of the command structure (–4).

*If Hostile (Attacked by PCs)*: Orders nearby caravan guards to apprehend the PCs, then retreats to safety.

*If Unfriendly (Check Result 0 or Less)*: Orders the PCs to man the walls immediately. A half-hour later, he orders Gorgoreth to check up on the PCs and make sure they're truly loyal.

*If Indifferent (Check Result 1–14)*: Entertains obvious suggestions that directly improve the security of the outpost, such as digging trenches or establishing a reserve of troops to counterattack.

*If Friendly (Check Result 15–29)*: Considers—and possibly even suggests—activities that send a strike team (the PCs, basically) beyond the walls of the outpost for reconnaissance or a commando raid.

*If Helpful (Check Result 30 or More)*: Gives PCs indirect control of the outpost's defenses. Laalarash still issues the orders, but he takes PC advice as long as it's plausible.

## Talking to Gorgoreth

Gorgoreth is in the unenviable position of not commanding his own outpost. For three years, Gorgoreth managed Outpost Three, keeping it safe from elf bandits (though never ones as persistent as the current groups), belgoi tribes, and other monsters from the surrounding wasteland. But since Outpost Three's purpose is to support House Klethira's caravans, he's subordinate to Laalarash and was forced to concede command of the outpost to him.

To say that Gorgoreth chafes under Laalarash's diffident command is an understatement. Most of the outpost defenders (caravan guard and outpost guard alike) can tell that Gorgoreth isn't happy. But Gorgoreth has seen ineffective caravan masters before, so he's determined to suffer Laalarash while he quietly does his best to keep Outpost Three safe.

**Creature**: Gorgoreth has a secret. He's in the pay of House Stel, the dominant merchant house in Urik. Stel's agents pay Gorgoreth to use his *remote viewing* power to periodically report on House Klethira's caravan schedules. When the elves started attacking Outpost Three, Gorgoreth sent word to both House Klethira headquarters in Urik and his contact with House Stel.

Gorgoreth knows that House Klethira has sent a relief column that'll arrive in three days time. He also suspects that House Stel might be sending aid—although House Stel might just keep Outpost Three for itself if it arrives to find it ill-defended.

The PCs could talk to Gorgoreth for any number of reasons, from the tactical ("What's in the western warehouses?") to the strategic ("What if we abandon the outpost for a few days, then reoccupy it once the elves move on?"). Gorgoreth's specific responses to PC inquiries thus can vary quite a bit; don't be afraid to diverge from the suggested responses given in the Development section.

**Gorgoreth Human Psi7 (seer)**: CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d4+24; hp 41; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +2 melee (1d6–1, quarterstaff) or +4 ranged touch (3d6, *dorje of crystal shard*); SA psionics; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 13.

*Skills*: Concentration +12, Gather Information +3, Knowledge (geography) +13, Knowledge (local) +13, Listen +12, Psicraft +13, Spot +12.

*Feats*: Alertness, Greater Psionic Endowment, Narrow Mind, Psionic Body, Psionic Endowment, Psionic Meditation.

*Languages*: Common, Elven, Maenadi, Thri-Kreen.

*Powers Known* (62 PP; save DC 13 + power level): 1st—*detect psionics, force screen, inertial armor, mind thrust, precognition, psionic charm*; 2nd—*clairvoyant sense, detect hostile intent, id insinuation, object reading, psionic lock*; 3rd—*dispel psionics, energy bolt, mental barrier, psionic blast*; 4th—*mindwipe, remote viewing*.

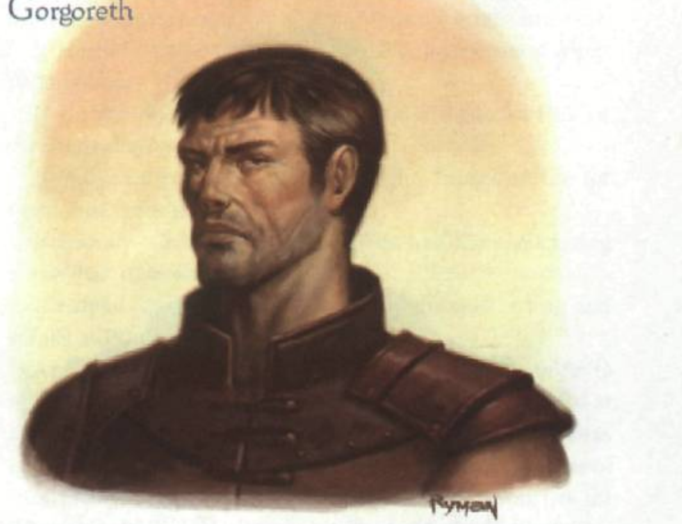
*Possessions*: *Cognizance crystal* (3), *dorje of crystal shard* (augmented to 3d6; 21 charges remaining), quarterstaff, power stone of *psionic dimension door*, power stone of *wall of ectoplasm*.

**Tactics**: Moreso than most NPCs, Gorgoreth needs a few rounds to prepare before he enters battle. He relies on his psionic powers for protection, so he manifests *inertial armor* (spending 7 power points to get a +7 armor bonus to AC) and *force screen* (spending 1 power point to get a +4 shield bonus). In a fight, Gorgoreth can also increase his AC by +4 as an immediate action by manifesting the *mental barrier* power (which costs 5 power points). Thus his Armor Class is usually 22 or 26, depending on his *mental barrier*.

Gorgoreth has the Greater Psionic Endowment, Narrow Mind, and Psionic Meditation feats, so he prefers to manifest a power that requires a saving throw, expending his focus to add +2 to the save DC. Then he'll spend a move action to refocus (+16 Concentration check, DC 20). He's also not shy about augmenting his powers—Gorgoreth considers combat something to be ended as quickly as possible.

In rough order of preference, Gorgoreth's powers that require saving throws are: *mindwipe* (two negative levels, Fort negates DC 17, 7 power points), *psionic blast* (stuns for 2 rounds, Will negates DC 16, 7 power points), *energy bolt* (7d6 electricity, Reflex half DC 19, 7 power points), *id insinuation* (3 targets confused, Will negates DC 17, 7 power points), *mind thrust* (7d10 damage, Will negates DC 17, 7 power points), and *psionic charm* (extra creature types, Will negates DC 16, 5 power points). Increase all saving throw DCs by +2 if Gorgoreth expends his focus.

Gorgoreth



If Gorgoreth isn't directly threatened (he's manning the walls with others against an elf attack, for example), he manifests powers to increase his Armor Class, then fires his *dorje of crystal shard* every round from behind cover.

Gorgoreth retrieves and activates his power stone of *psionic dimension door* to get away if he falls below 15 hit points.

**Development**: Gorgoreth's initial attitude is unfriendly, which represents his brusque nature and the fact that he has a lot competing for his attention more than any actual malice toward the PCs. The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence him: the PCs tell Gorgoreth that they're frustrated with Laalarash (+2); he witnesses the PCs handily defeating elves (+4); the PCs suggest mutiny against Laalarash (–2); PCs advocate abandoning the outpost (–4).

*If Hostile (Check Result 4 or Less)*: Gorgoreth orders the PCs to guard the walls, and uses psionics to force them from his presence if necessary. "Beat it, or I'll make your brains leak out your ears."

*If Unfriendly (Check Result 5–14)*: Tells PCs to go deal with Laalarash. "He's in charge here, not me."

*If Indifferent (Check Result 15–24)*: Answers questions as long as the PCs have a satisfactory explanation for why they want to know. "The picks and shovels are locked up in the northwest warehouse; why do you ask?"

*If Friendly (Check Result 25–39)*: Takes the PCs into his confidence—to a degree. "If we could just set up a parley with the elves, we might be able to work something out. The raiders themselves aren't willing to talk, but if we could get to the chiefs somehow..."

*If Helpful (Check Result 40 or More)*: Takes the PCs completely into his confidence. "There's help on the way from Urik, but it'll take three days to get here. If we can just bog the elves down in negotiations for a few days, the relief column will be here."

The friendly or helpful results set up the PCs for Chapter Four, when they leave Outpost Three to find the elves and the mysterious leader behind them.

## The Third Degree (EL 2)

If the PCs (or perhaps other outpost defenders) took an elf captive during the sunset raid, the prisoner regains consciousness at about 3 bells after sunrise the next morning unless he receives magical healing before then.

**Creature**: Alie-Aka is an elf rogue from the Swiftwing tribe. He's been stripped of everything but a loincloth and sandals. Scars and fresher wounds crisscross his torso and especially his back. While conscious, he's probably still at negative hit points; use –5 if NPC outpost defenders took him captive.

**Alie-Aka (2)**: hp 9; other stats as for the Swiftwing rogues in Elves on the Wire, page 35.

**Development**: Alie-Aka's initial attitude is hostile. At first he'll only curse in Elven at his captors, but it's possible for skilled interrogators to draw him out with either Diplomacy or Intimidate.

The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence him: PCs use a good cop/bad cop technique, with a Diplomacy check assisting an Intimidate attempt or vice versa (+2); PCs threaten Alie-Aka with imprisonment (+4); PCs speak to him in Elven (+4); PCs threaten him with pain or death (–2); PCs knock him out again (–4 after he regains consciousness.)

*If Hostile (Check Result 19 or Less)*: Insults but says nothing further. Accidentally gives his name.

*If Unfriendly (Check Result 20–24)*: Reveals Swiftwing strength in general terms, and anything else that'll scare his captors. Tries Bluff to set himself up as a guide through Swiftwing lands (he actually plans to lead the PCs into an ambush).

*If Indifferent (Check Result 25–34)*: Brags about how the Swiftwings are still "strong in numbers and pure of spirit." Explains that if they set him free, he'll sketch them a map that avoids the Swiftwing cordon. The route leads straight past a Swiftwing observation post, which Alie-Aka won't mark on the map, but the map is otherwise reasonably accurate.

*If Friendly (Check Result 35–49)*: Describes Swiftwing forces in detail, but can't explain the sustained siege. Draws an area map that's accurate, including the location of Swiftwing observation posts and the general location of the other two elf tribes.

*If Helpful (Check Result 50 or More)*: Explains that a mysterious cloaked figure named Karadao visits the chieftain every week or so. Alie-Aka has seen Karadao only once, and noticed that there was a bulky—maybe obese—figure under those black robes.

It's unlikely that the PCs' Intimidate or Diplomacy checks improve Alie-Aka's attitude to friendly or helpful, but *psionic charm* and *charm person* immediately improve Alie-Aka's attitude to friendly.

**Ad-Hoc Experience Award**: If the PCs are able to improve Alie-Aka's attitude at least to indifferent, they earn experience as if they had defeated him in combat.

## A Gathering Storm

One bell before sunset on the second day, read or paraphrase the following.

> Following the gaze and pointed fingers of the guards on the stone berm, you look to the east. The horizon is obscured by a massive gray-black cloud that stretches high into the sky, roiling as if it were a thing alive.

A successful Survival check (DC 15) is sufficient to confirm the rumor sweeping across Outpost Three: a massive duststorm is bearing down on the outpost and will arrive shortly after nightfall.

After about 15 minutes of game time have passed, read or paraphrase the following.

> Laalarash has assembled all the able-bodied outpost defenders near the well-house. "My weather observations indicate that a duststorm is on its way," he says. "A big one."
>
> "At least we won't have to worry about the elves tonight—they're probably scurrying into whatever holes and crevices they can find. Disassemble all the tents and anything that won't withstand a storm, then report to Gorgoreth, who will assign you to one of the warehouses. You'll stay there until the dust storm has passed."

The PCs are expected to help dismantle the tents, but don't dwell on this overlong. Once the PCs are ready, Gorgoreth assigns them to the center western warehouse. Read or paraphrase the following:

> Gorgoreth dismisses the *psionic lock* and lets you inside, then closes the door behind you. "It should be obvious when the duststorm has passed. Until then, stay inside. Oh, and Laalarash says to stay out of the crates—it's mostly dried food and rootwine for the obsidian mines. That's what Laalarash says."

If the PCs previously talked to Gorgoreth and know about the relief column heading toward Outpost Three, Gorgoreth adds that he's worried. "If they can't reach shelter, the storm'll wipe them out," he says grimly.

Not long after Gorgoreth shuts the warehouse door, the PCs hear the wind pick up, eventually reaching a dull roar that makes sleep somewhat difficult. The PCs can pilfer the trade goods in the warehouse if they like—there's no real consequences if they do.

## Chapter Three: Night of the Duststorm

While neither elves nor PCs can function long in the midst of a duststorm, Karadao has other minions at his disposal. During the night, he sends Athasian zombies (a template described in the Appendix) against the PCs.

This sets up another cascade of linked battles using a common map. As in Chapter One, use your own sense of pacing to determine how quickly one encounter follows another. The first encounter occurs about three bells after sunset.

### Zombies at the Door (EL 7)

**Light**: Torches inside warehouse (normal illumination).
**Sound**: Roaring duststorm outside (automatic; imposes a –4 penalty on Listen checks to hear anything else).
**Reaction**: None.
**Aura**: Faint evil (zombie rogues).
**Important Rules**: Turn or Rebuke Undead, *Player's Handbook* 159; Greater duststorm, *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* 94.

> You're finally getting used to the roar of the duststorm outside and the hiss of fine sand seeping into the warehouse through cracks in the walls and ceiling.
>
> With a boom and a crack, the top half of the warehouse door staves in. Through the dust you can dimly see elves bearing a makeshift battering ram.

Have the PCs make Spot checks immediately, and tell anyone who gets a DC 10 or better that these elves are pale white and glassy-eyed.

Then have the players roll initiative as the elf zombies start to clamber into the warehouse.

**Creatures**: Because they don't breathe and are immune to nonlethal damage, zombies can survive in a duststorm with little difficulty. They attack several of the warehouses, including the one the PCs occupy.

**➧ Zombie Swiftwing Rogue, Athasian Zombie Elf Rog2 (4)**: CR 3; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 13; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+3, slam) or +6 ranged (1d8/×3, masterwork longbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+3, slam) and –1 melee (1d4+1 plus disease, bite) or +6 ranged (1d8/×3, masterwork longbow); SA disease, psionics, sneak attack +1d6; SQ damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead qualities; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 19, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 4.

**Zombie Plague (Su)**: Supernatural disease—bite, Fortitude DC 8. Incubation period 1 minute. Damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha.

*Skills*: Balance +6, Bluff +2, Diplomacy –1, Hide +9, Intimidate –1, Jump +18, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +7, Spot +7, Survival +0 (+2 following tracks), Tumble +11.

*Feats*: Endurance$^{B}$, Speed of Thought.

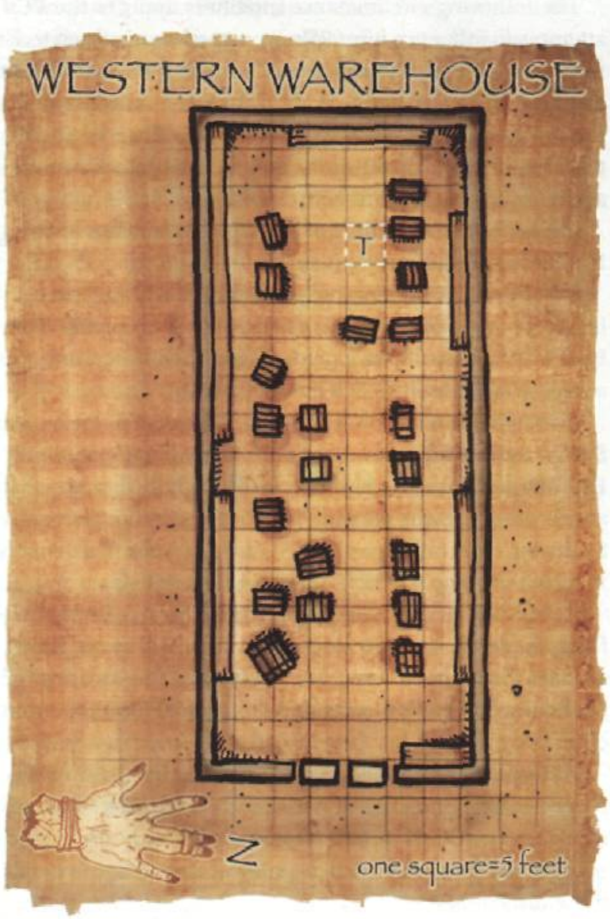
*Languages*: Common, Elven.

*Powers Known* (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*.

*Possessions*: Masterwork longbow, 5 iron arrows, masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler.

**Tactics**: Players used to standard D&D zombies are in for a surprise—these zombies are fast, smart, and skilled. Play up their speed, and make sure you check for zombie plague infection with each successful bite. The zombie rogues' Armor Class goes down to 19 if they used their bows in the previous round, because they use bucklers. Don't forget that they have damage reduction of 5/slashing and are immune to mind-affecting spells and powers.

The PCs have one key advantage in this fight: the zombies must climb through the hole in the warehouse door to get inside. The zombie rogues have a Climb bonus of +3 and getting through the gap in the door is a DC 0 check, but the zombies use accelerated climbing (taking a –5 penalty on the roll), so there's a chance they'll fail and make no progress. If a zombie succeeds on the climb check, it takes 10 feet of movement to get through the door. While



entering, the zombies can't use their bucklers and don't get their Dexterity bonus to Armor Class, so they're AC 15 until they get inside and spend a move action to ready their bucklers again.

**Development**: These zombies are tough to fight for PCs without slashing weapons. If few or no PCs have slashing weapons, put a box of bronze scimitars (captured from the elves) somewhere in the warehouse.

When this encounter is wrapping up, move to the Zombie on the Roof encounter below unless the PCs need time to heal. Because the next encounter starts with two rounds of a thudding sound from outside the warehouse, it is a particularly good encounter to begin while the PCs are still occupied with this encounter.

**Ad-Hoc Experience Award**: Because the PCs have a significant terrain advantage in this fight, award 10% less experience than you otherwise would. It's a high-EL encounter relative to the PCs' level, so it'll still be a big experience point award.

## Zombie on the Roof (EL 5)

**Light**: Torches inside warehouse (normal illumination).
**Sound**: Roaring duststorm outside (automatic; imposes a –4 penalty on Listen checks to hear anything else).
**Reaction**: None.
**Aura**: Moderate evil (zombie crodlu-tamer).
**Important Rules**: Turn or Rebuke Undead, *Player's Handbook* 159; *Greater duststorm, DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* 94.

> You hear a thud every second or so, coming from the trap door in the roof. With each thud, the trap door seems to shiver.

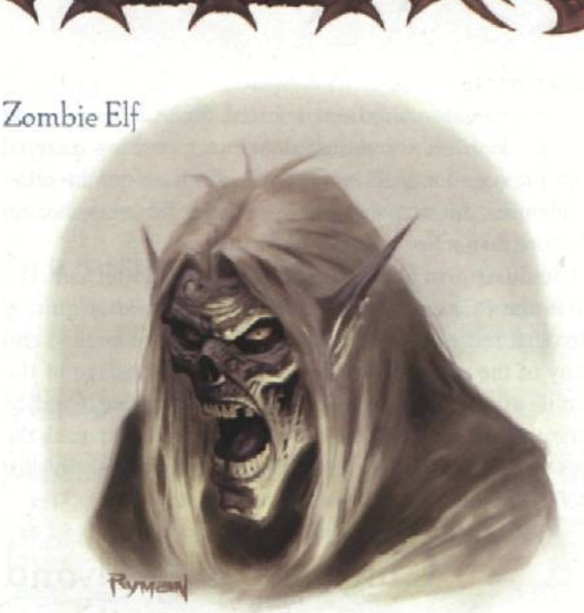
**Creature**: A zombie atop the warehouse jumps up and down on the trap door, trying to cave it in. The zombie crashes through the trap door into the warehouse after two rounds of jumping. The ten-foot drop inflicts 1d6 points of damage to the zombie unless it makes a Jump check (DC 15) to reduce the effective height of the fall to zero feet.

➧ **Zombie Swiftwing Crodlu-Tamer, Athasian Zombie Elf Rgr3/Ftr1**; CR 5; Medium undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, slam) or +8 ranged (1d8/×3, masterwork longbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, slam) and +1 melee (1d4+2 plus disease, bite) or +8 ranged (1d8/×3, masterwork longbow); SA disease, favored enemy (human) +2, psionics, two weapon combat style; SQ damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 20, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 4.

**Zombie Plague (Su)**: Supernatural disease—bite, Fortitude DC 9. Incubation period 1 minute. Damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha.

*Skills*: Handle Animal +4, Hide +11, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Search +2, Spot +8, Survival +6.

*Feats*: Endurance$^B$, Psionic Weapon, Track$^B$, Two-Weapon Fighting$^B$, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword).



Zombie Elf

*Languages*: Common, Elven.

*Powers Known* (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*.

*Possessions*: Masterwork longbow, 5 iron arrows, masterwork studded leather.

**Tactics**: This zombie has both a potent ranged attack and a good set of melee attacks. It hangs back and shoots arrows at PCs if it can, then moves into melee and makes as many full attacks as possible. It has damage reduction of 5/slashing, and it's smart enough to use its arrows on PCs with slashing weapons, then stand toe-to-toe with a foe wielding a bludgeoning or piercing weapon.

**Development**: This encounter leads right into the Zombies Everywhere encounter below, subject to your sense of pacing.

## Zombies Everywhere (EL 6)

**Light**: Torches inside warehouse (normal illumination).
**Sound**: Roaring duststorm outside (automatic; imposes a –4 penalty on Listen checks to hear anything else).
**Reaction**: None.
**Aura**: Faint evil (zombie rogues).
**Important Rules**: Turn or Rebuke Undead, *Player's Handbook*, p. 159; Greater duststorm, *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, p. 94.

> After a moment of quiet, another zombie appears at the door. You also hear footsteps on the roof.

This encounter is simple, but dangerous. Two more zombies (one rogue and one crodlu-tamer) attack the warehouse. One drops through the open trap door and another comes through the hole in the front door.

➧ **Zombie Swiftwing Rogue**: hp 12; see Zombies at the Door, above.

➧ **Zombie Crodlu-Tamer**: hp 24; see Zombie on the Roof, above.

**Development**: If the PCs are too worn out for this encounter, it's OK to skip it.

## Aftermath

Once the zombies have been defeated, the PCs can patch up the trap door and warehouse door using packing material from the warehouse. PCs can try to check on the the other warehouses, but surviving exposure to the greater duststorm for more than a few rounds is difficult.

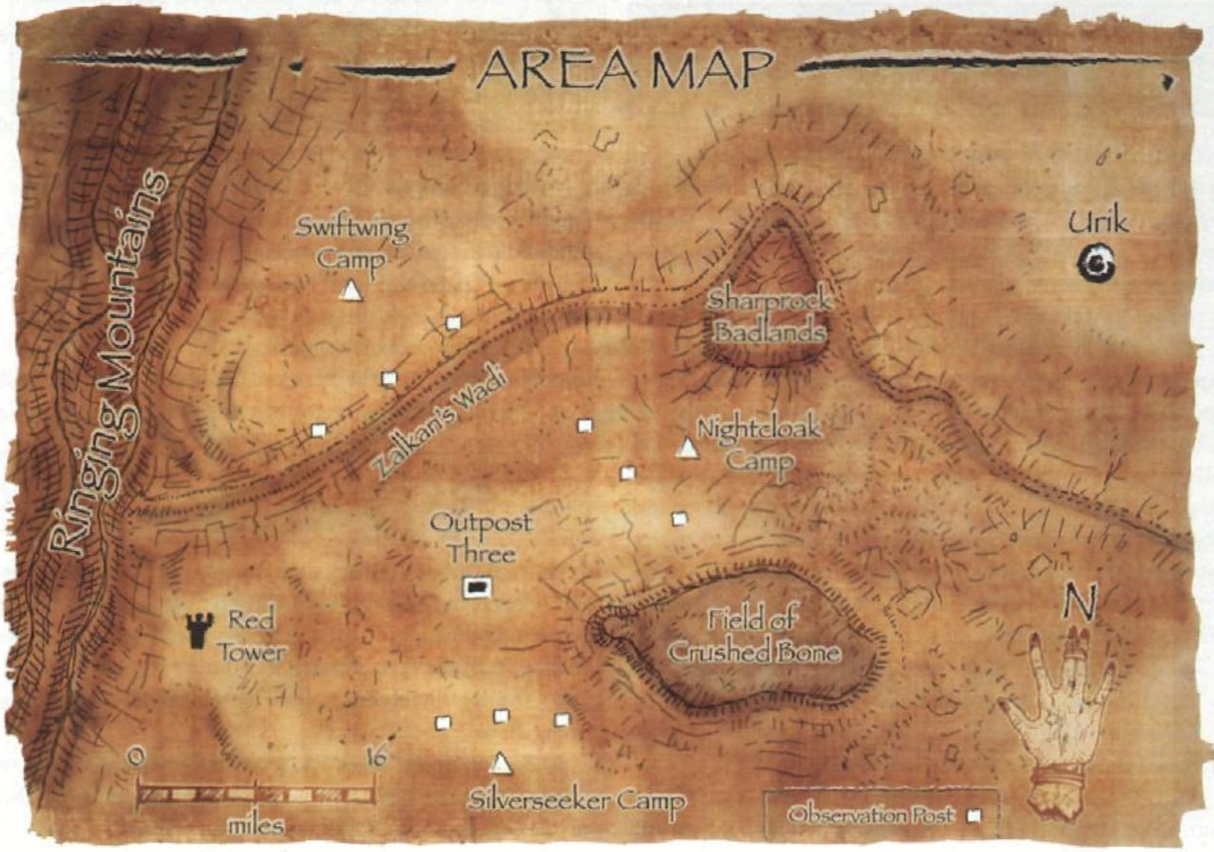
The duststorm abates at about two bells after sunrise. When the PCs emerge from the warehouse, they quickly learn that most of the other warehouses were breached and many of the outpost defenders slain. The carnage of the zombie attack increases the pressure on Laalarash and/or Gorgoreth to somehow end the siege. Their plans (attack the elves or parley with them, respectively) will definitely involve the PCs, sending them beyond the outpost.

# Chapter Four: Beyond Outpost Three

At this point, "Last Stand at Outpost Three" becomes less of an adventure and more of a jumping-off point for your DARK SUN campaign. The PCs almost certainly leave the outpost on a journey of some sort, but its purpose and destination is up to you and the players.

Some possible journeys include:

- Gorgoreth sends the PCs to negotiate with the elves. The PCs must brave the rigors of the stony barrens, survive the elves guarding the Swiftwing camp, then negotiate with the elf chief. If they succeed at a DC 15 Sense Motive check or use *detect psionics*, they'll be able to tell that the chief of the Swiftwing tribe has been *dominated*.
- Laalarash sends the PCs on a reconnaissance mission. As above, but the players aren't trying to talk with the elves but spy on their movements and hopefully get warning of an attack. The adventure turns into a cat-and-mouse game between the PCs and the elves, played out across the stony landscape.
- Laalarash sends the PCs on a reprisal raid. As above, but the PCs aren't trying to remain hidden. They're trying to find and slay as many elves as they can.
- Laalarash or Gorgoreth sends the PCs to find the relief column. The duststorm didn't destroy it completely, but it did leave the convoy exhausted and lost. The PCs must find the rescue convoy and then guide it back to Outpost Three.
- Gorgoreth sends the PCs to connect with House Stel mercenaries nearby. A group of maenad mercenaries in the pay of House Stel was also on its way to Outpost Three when the duststorm struck. Though their numbers are depleted, they could be useful allies in the defense of the outpost—or they could try to seize Outpost Three for House Stel.
- The PCs strike out on their own to deal with the elves—and whoever's behind them. If they got Alie-Aka to talk, it's possible they know of Karadao. If they can free the Swiftwing chief from *domination* or successfully interrogate him,



they'll learn the location of the mysterious Red Tower and Karadao. If the PCs meet zombies during one of their other missions, they could track the undead back to the Red Tower.

- The PCs convince Laalarash and Gorgoreth to abandon Outpost Three. Miles of hostile wilderness separate a ragtag convoy from civilization. The PCs must take a lead role in finding the way back—and defending the survivors of Outpost Three en route.
- The PCs bug out. It's certainly conceivable that the players grow weary of the squabbling between Laalarash and Gorgoreth and decide that the fate of Outpost Three isn't important to them. They'll have to get out of the outpost alive (Laalarash is keen to shoot deserters), then make their way back to civilization, probably to either Urik or Tyr.

Let both the play style of your group and your plans for an ongoing Dark Sun campaign guide you at this point. If your players enjoy intrigue and negotiation, have them try to negotiate with the elves. If they are spoiling for another fight, send them out elf-hunting. If you want to use Karadao as a master villain in your Dark Sun game, point the PCs toward the Red Tower.

The PCs have a destination in mind, whether it's the elf camp, the Red Tower, the city-state of Urik, or a relief caravan lost in the wilderness. This adventure ends—and the next one begins—when they reach that destination. But first, they must survive the wilds of Athas.

One of the greatest dangers that faces desert travelers in the world of Dark Sun is the weather. There's little chance of precipitation in the desert, but the overall temperature can impact how much ground can be covered in a day of travel.

### TABLELANDS WEATHER

| d% | Weather |
|---|---|
| 01–10 | Cooler, calm. High of 55°F + (3d4 × 5). |
| 11–70 | Hot, calm. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5). |
| 81–85 | Hot, breezy. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5). Moderate winds. |
| 86–90 | Hot, windy. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5). Strong winds. |
| 91–97 | Duststorm. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5). |
| 98 | Greater duststorm. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5). |
| 99–100 | Tyr storm (equivalent to thunderstorm). High of 55°F + (3d4 × 5). |

Weather conditions are defined in Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. For simplicity's sake, the temperature high lasts from 1 to 4 P.M. and the low lasts from 1 to 4 A.M. The temperature tails off by 5 degrees per hour from 4 P.M. to 1 A.M., and rises at a steady pace after 4 A.M. until it reaches the new day's high at about 1 P.M.

The Heat Dangers in Dark Sun section of the "*Dark Sun Player's Handbook*" in *Dragon* #319 has rules for functioning in the heat. Characters will find it somewhat difficult to travel in temperatures above 90 degrees because they'll probably take at least a few points of nonlethal damage. Once the temperature is above 110 degrees, characters take damage more frequently. Above 130 degrees, the damage is lethal.

The region between Outpost Three and civilization is a desolate wasteland. Check for an encounter once every hour; the chance of an encounter occurring is 5%. Most of these creatures appear in the *Dark Sun Monster Supplement* (p. 82), but some will appear in *Dungeon* #111.

### STONY BARRENS ENCOUNTER TABLE

| d% | Encounter | Average EL |
|---|---|---|
| 01–03 | Thri-kreen hunters (described below) | 7 |
| 04–06 | Black Reavers (described below) | 7 |
| 07–09 | 1 crodlu and 1 swiftwing crodlu-tamer | 6 |
| 10–12 | 1 sand howler | 6 |
| 13–15 | 1d3 zombie swiftwing rogues | 5 |
| 16–17 | 1 gith trooper (described below) | 5 |
| 18–22 | 1d3 very young spinewyrms (described below) | 5 |
| 23–26 | 1d3 Huge viper snakes | 5 |
| 27–31 | 1d4+2 baazrags | 5 |
| 32–34 | 1d4 belgoi | 5 |
| 35–40 | 1d4 jhakars | 5 |
| 41–45 | 1 cilops | 5 |
| 46–58 | 1d4 swiftwing rogues | 4 |
| 59–63 | 1d4 Medium monstrous scorpions | 4 |
| 64–68 | 1d3 Huge monstrous centipedes | 4 |
| 69–73 | 1 fordorran | 4 |
| 74–77 | 1 pterrax | 4 |
| 78–81 | 1 razorwing | 4 |
| 82–86 | 1 boneclaw baazrag | 4 |
| 87–90 | 1 lirr | 3 |
| 91–95 | 1 crodlu | 3 |
| 96–100 | 1d4 zhackals | 3 |

## Thri-Kreen Hunters (EL 7)

> Two lean, dusty thri-kreen twitch their mandibles in your direction as they look at you. Each carries an iron gythka and has a pouch at its hip.
>
> "You're not elves," one says in a raspy voice.

**Creatures:** These thri-kreen are on the verge of starvation, and they're tracking some of their favorite meat: elf-flesh. They won't start a fight against the PCs unless the PCs look weak or flaunt the fact that they have food. If the PCs attack them, they'll show no mercy.

➧ **Thri-Kreen Hunters, Thri-Kreen Rgr4 (2):** CR 5; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 6d8+6; hp 34, 32; Init +4; Spd 50 ft.; AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d10+7, *+1 iron gythka*) or +10 ranged (1d6+4, iron chatkcha); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d10+7, *+1 iron gythka*) and +8 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws) and +8 melee (1d4+2 plus poison, bite) or +10/+5 ranged (1d6+4, iron chatkcha); SA poison, psi-like abilities, favored enemy (elves) +2; SQ thri-kreen qualities, wild empathy +1; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 4.

**Poison (Ex)**: Bite, initial damage 1d6 Dex, secondary damage paralysis, DC 12. A thri-kreen produces sufficient poison for only one bite per day.

*Skills*: Hide +8, Jump +47, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6, Survival +6.

*Feats*: Deflect Arrows[B], Endurance[B], Multiattack, Multiweapon Fighting[B], Quick Draw, Speed of Thought, Track[B].

*Languages*: Common, Thri-Kreen.

*Psi-like Abilities*: 3/day—*chameleon, know direction*; 1/day: *psionic displacement* and *metaphysical claw*. These abilities are as the powers manifested by a wilder of 3rd level.

*Possessions*: *+1 studded leather, +1 iron gythka*, 6 iron chatkchas.

**Tactics**: These thri-kreen prefer to strike from ambush, so they withdraw long enough to use their psi-like ability of *chameleon*, which improves their Hide bonus to +23 for 30 minutes at a time. They then try to sneak up on the PCs. If they know a fight is coming, they'll use their *metaphysical claw* psi-like ability (+1 attack and +1 damage for the next three minutes). They use their *greater concealing amorpha* psi-like ability if they need to retreat from battle.

The thri-kreen often throw chatkchas, using Quick-Draw to draw between throws if necessary, then wait for the PCs to charge them. If the PCs do, the thri-kreen unleash a full attack and catch the chatkcha they threw the previous round. With a speed of 50 ft. and a Jump bonus of +47, they have terrific maneuverability.

**Development**: If the PCs try to negotiate, the thri-kreen might agree to a joint attack on the nearby elves. Their starting attitude is unfriendly, and the following circumstance modifiers apply to PCs' attempts to influence them: PCs offer food (+2); PCs express intent to attack elves (+4); PCs act sympathetic toward elves or have elves among them (–2); PCs insult thri-kreen heritage (–4).

*If Hostile (Check Result 4 or Less)*: Attack immediately. "Die, fleshling!"

*If Unfriendly (Check Result 5–14)*: Warn away, and attack if PCs don't comply. "Leave our hunt the way you came, or you'll be our next meal."

*If Indifferent (Check Result 15–24)*: Agree to coordinate attack, but not detailed planning. "We'll attack at sunset, fine, but stay out of our way."

*If Friendly (Check Result 25–39)*: Agree to coordinated attack, including stealth or undercover. "Plenty of meat for all hunters, eh?"

*If Helpful (Check Result 40 or more)*: Agree to any reasonable plan the PCs suggest. "Our empty bellies can wait."

**Ad-Hoc Experience Award**: Award the PCs experience for this encounter if they defeat the thri-kreen in combat, or if they jointly attack nearby elves.

## Black Reavers (EL 7)

The Black Reavers are a maenad mercenary company hired by the Stel merchant house in Urik. After Gorgoreth tipped House Stel off, they immediately sent a platoon to Outpost Three. The mission: assist House Klethira in the defense of the outpost, unless the outpost had already fallen or Klethira's troops were badly depleted; in that case, kill everyone and seize the outpost for House Stel.

But the duststorm of a few days ago caught the Black Reavers out in the open, killing all the mounts and most of the mercenaries as well. The stragglers have been grimly marching onward with little food or water, trying to reach Outpost Three and complete their mission.

If Gorgoreth sent the PCs to find the Black Reavers, he'll give them passwords that convince the Reavers that the PCs are allies. Otherwise, the Black Reavers' first instinct is to attack.

**Black Reavers, Maenad Psy3 (4)**: CR 3; Medium humanoid (maenad); HD 3d8+3; hp 17, 16, 15, 14; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+3, *claws of the beast*) or +3 ranged (1d8+3, composite longbow); SA outburst, *energy ray*; SQ maenad traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 6.

*Skills*: Autohypnosis +8, Concentration +7.

*Feats*: Greater Psionic Fist, Point Blank Shot, Psionic Fist, Psionic Shot.

*Languages*: Common, Maenadi.

*Powers Known* (8 PP; save DC 12 + power level): 1st—*claws of the beast, prevenom, stomp*.

*Possessions*: Composite longbow (+3 Str), 10 iron arrows, *+1 spiked bronze breastplate*, power stone of *force screen*.

**Tactics**: A Black Reaver's first action in combat is to retrieve and activate a *power stone of force screen* to get +4 AC for the next minute. Then the psychic warrior manifests *stomp* if there's a group of enemies within a 20-foot cone or uses a longbow or its sonic *energy ray* if targets are farther away. Against targets within 30 ft., the Black Reavers' bows get an extra +1 on attack and damage due to their Point Blank Shot feat.

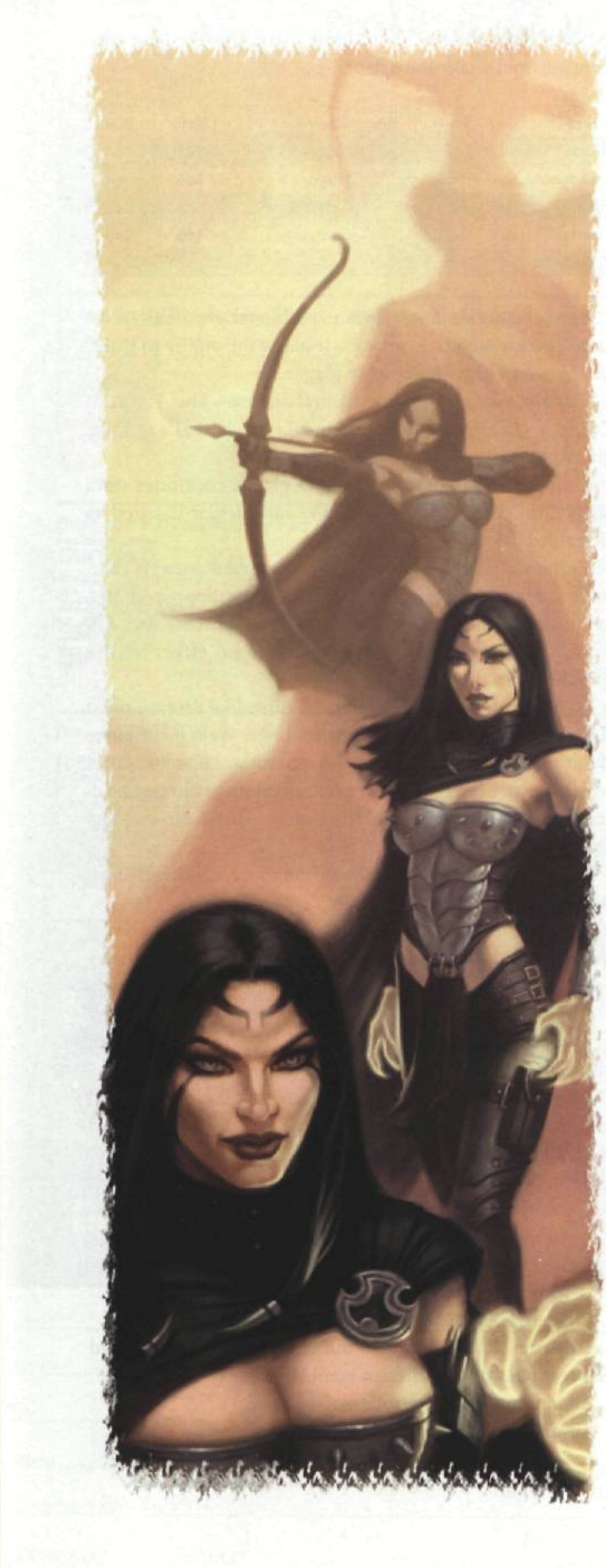
If the PCs engage a Black Reaver in melee, she responds by manifesting *claws of the beast* as a swift action, preferably spending 3 power points to augment the claws so they each deal 1d6 points of damage. The Black Reavers are all psionically focused, so their first successful melee attack deals an additional +2d6 points of damage. Black Reavers who get a round's respite during a fight manifest *prevenom* on their claws so their next attack deals 2 points of Constitution damage (Fort DC 13 negates). The *prevenom* lasts for 3 minutes.

Individual Black Reavers fight until slain, but the group makes a fighting withdrawal once they take half their number in casualties, unless their foes are likewise diminished.

**Development**: If this encounter seems too tough for the PCs, the maenads have taken 5 points each of nonlethal damage from dehydration and are fatigued from overexposure to the heat. These changes effectively reduce their Challenge Rating by –1.

## Gith Trooper (EL 5)

**Creature**: This is a straightforward encounter with a battle-crazed gith trooper. He attacks on sight.



**Gith Trooper, Gith Soulknife 4:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (gith); HD 4d10+4; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+5/19–20, *+1 mind blade*) or +7 ranged (1d6+5/19–20, *+1 mind blade*); SA mind blade, throw mind blade, psychic strike +1d8; SQ psi-like abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 12.

*Skills*: Concentration +8, Hide +9, Move Silently +9, Spot +8.

*Feats*: Armor Proficiency (medium), Psionic Weapon, Weapon Focus (mind blade)$^{B}$, Wild Talent$^{B}$.

*Languages*: Gith.

*Psi-Like Abilities*: 3/day—*biofeedback, control flames, matter agitation*. Manifester level 2nd.

*Possessions*: *+1 heartening heavy wooden shield, +1 chitin armor*.

**Tactics:** The gith's first action is to use its psi-like ability of *biofeedback* to gain damage reduction of 2/— for the next 2 minutes. If it has time, it also activates the *heartening* ability on its shield, giving it 31 hit points for the impending fight.

It then strikes in melee or ranged combat with its mind blade, depending on the situation. The gith's first successful hit with the mind blade against a living foe deals an extra +2d6 (from the Psionic Weapon feat) and +1d8 (from the soulknife's psychic strike class feature) points of damage.

Gith troopers are ordinarily cautious foes, but this one is mad to the point of incoherence. It fights until slain.

## Spinewyrms (EL 5)

These very young spinewyrms are simply floating above the Athasian landscape, hunting for food when they spy the PCs. They attack immediately.

**Very Young Spinewyrms (2):** CR 3; Small dragon (psionic); HD 6d12; hp 39, 38; Init +5; Spd 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect); AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +5; Atk +11 melee (1d8+3, bite) or +8 ranged (1d4+3, 6 spines); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+1, bite) and +5 melee (1d4+1, spines) or +8 ranged (1d4+3, 6 spines); SA improved grab, impale, detachable spines, spine volley; SQ blindsense, keen senses, spinewyrm immunities; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10.

*Skills*: Hide +14, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Spot +10, Survival +10.

*Feats*: Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite)$^{B}$, Weapon Focus (bite).

**Tactics:** These spinewyrms are aggressive and lack the caution and cunning possessed by more mature spinewyrms. At first they'll stay up in the air, shooting quill volleys that encompass as many foes as possible (all targets of a volley must be within 30 feet of each other). But once their enemies disperse (or after three volleys in any event), the spinewyrms swoop down, making full attacks with their bite and spine attacks. Once they've taken half their hit points in damage, they fight a little more cautiously, using the Flyby Attack feat to avoid attacks from the PCs.

These spinewyrms aren't big enough to grapple the PCs effectively, so they just attack with teeth and spines. They're so aggressive that they fight until slain.

# Appendix: Athasian Zombie Template

The world of Athas has almost no unintelligent undead. Whether animated by magic, spawned by other undead, or created through other means, the undead of DARK SUN keenly remember their time among the living, whom they hate with a bitter passion.

The most common form of undead is the thinking zombie of Athas. Negative energy holds their rotting flesh together—for years if the zombie can somehow keep out of the sun, but only for weeks if frequently exposed to sunlight. Unless given specific orders from a master (often its creator or a cleric who can command undead), Athasian zombies wander the world, destroying every sign of civilization they can find.

## Creating an Athasian Zombie

"Athasian zombie" is an acquired template that can be added to any living corporeal creature that has a skeletal system (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

**Size and Type:** The creature's type changes to undead. It retains any subtypes except alignment subtypes (such as good) and subtypes that indicate kind (such as reptilian). It does not gain the augmented subtype. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Hit Dice:** Raise the base creature's Hit Dice to d12s. If the base creature has more than 10 Hit Dice, it can't be made into a zombie with the *animate dead* spell.

**Speed:** As base creature, but no higher than 30 ft. for bipeds and 40 ft. for creatures with more than two legs. If the base creature can fly, its maneuverability drops by one category. If its maneuverability was clumsy to begin with, it can't fly anymore.

**Armor Class:** Natural armor bonus increases by a number based on the Athasian zombie's size:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tiny or smaller | +0 | Huge | +4 |
| Small | +1 | Gargantuan | +7 |
| Medium | +2 | Colossal | +11 |
| Large | +3 | | |

**Base Attack:** A zombie has a base attack bonus equal to 1/2 its Hit Dice.

**Attacks:** An Athasian zombie retains all the natural weapons, manufactured weapon attacks, and weapon proficiencies of the base creature. A zombie also gains a slam attack and a bite attack (at –5 attack) if it has a mouth.

**Damage:** Natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. The slam attack and bite attacks deal damage depending on the zombie's size. Use the base creature's slam damage if it's better.

| Size | Slam | Bite | Size | Slam | Bite |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fine | 1 | 1 | Large | 1d8 | 1d6 |
| Diminutive | 1d2 | 1 | Huge | 2d6 | 1d8 |
| Tiny | 1d3 | 1d2 | Gargantuan | 2d8 | 1d6 |
| Small | 1d4 | 1d3 | Colossal | 4d6 | 2d8 |
| Medium | 1d6 | 1d4 | | | |

**Special Attacks:** An Athasian zombie retains none of the base creature's special attacks. It gains the ability to infect victims of its bite with zombie plague.

*Zombie Plague (Su)*: Supernatural disease—bite, Fortitude DC 10 + 1/2 HD + Cha bonus. Incubation period 1 minute. Damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha.

Unlike normal diseases, zombie plague continues until the victim reaches Constitution 0 and dies or is cured as described below.

Zombie plague is a powerful supernatural disease. A character attempting to cast any conjuration (healing) spell on a creature afflicted with zombie plague must succeed on a DC 20 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the afflicted character.

To eliminate zombie plague, the curse-like disease must first be broken with *break enchantment* or *remove curse* (requiring a DC 20 caster level check for either spell), after which a caster level check is no longer necessary to cast healing spells on the victim, and the zombie plague can be magically cured as any normal disease.

An afflicted creature who dies of zombie plague rises as an Athasian zombie three days after death.

**Special Qualities:** An Athasian zombie loses most special qualities of the base creature. It retains any extraordinary special qualities that improve its melee or ranged attacks.

All Athasian zombies gain damage reduction 5/slashing.

**Saves:** Base save bonuses are Fort +1/3 HD, Ref +1/3 HD, and Will +1/2 HD + 2.

**Abilities:** An Athasian zombie's Strength increases by +4, and its Charisma decreases by –4 (to a minimum of 1). It has no Constitution score, and its Wisdom score changes to 10.

**Skills:** As base creature, but modified to reflect new ability scores.

**Feats:** As base creature, even if the Athasian zombie no longer meets the prerequisites.

**Environment:** Warm desert.

**Organization:** Any.

**Challenge Rating:** As base creature +1.

**Treasure:** None, other than the gear the base creature had before it became an Athasian zombie.

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil.

**Advancement:** By character class.

**Level Adjustment:** —. Ω